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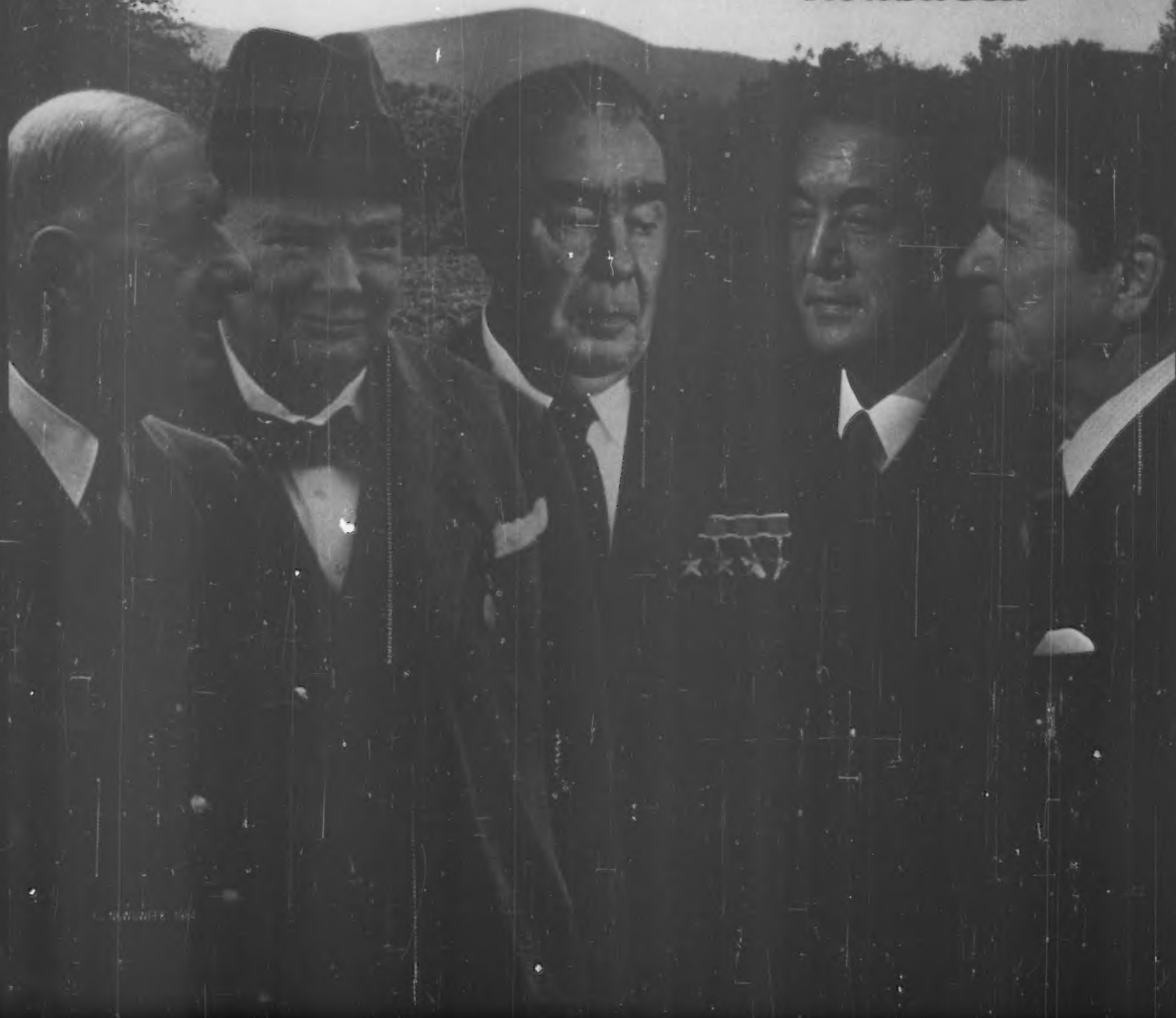
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Excerpt from the *Review's* founding editorial, Autumn 1961

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CHRONICLE

Slugging it out in Augusta

To Philip A. Kent, editorial page editor of *The Augusta Chronicle* and the *Augusta Herald*, the long-simmering feud between his newspapers and the sheriff of neighboring Columbia County was nothing more than the normal by-product of a free press exercising its right to "fair comment." Two lawsuits and ten stitches in his forehead later, Kent admits, "I never thought it would come to this."

This past January the combined Sunday edition ran a lengthy investigation that accused Columbia County Sheriff Tom Whitfield of trying to set up the thirty-two-year-old Kent on drunken-driving charges, and of later covering up another incident in which Whitfield's son allegedly attacked Kent in a bar. The story started on page one under a banner headline; inside, a picture of Kent's battered face ran with nearly two pages of text and a color diagram of the lounge where the editor had been punched out. The story also rebutted a series of charges leveled by the sheriff in a \$500,000 libel suit he had filed against the paper last August. Southeastern Newspapers Corp., the parent company of the morning *Chronicle* and the afternoon *Herald* and a subsidiary of Morris Communications Corp., followed up the article the next day by filing a suit of its own in U.S. District Court in Augusta, charging that Whitfield had violated Kent's and the newspapers' civil rights.

The dispute began shortly after Whitfield took office in early 1981, when the papers' editorial pages first questioned the former high school vocational instructor's qualifications in law enforcement. Since then, the papers have routinely lampooned the sheriff in print and cartoons — at least one made fun of his background as a basketball coach — and its news columns have needled him for several alleged misdeeds. Whitfield's suit against the company charges unfair, inaccurate, and malicious reporting by the *Chronicle* and the *Herald*, whose combined daily circulation makes the papers the second largest in Georgia. The sheriff contends that Kent, together with publisher and Morris Communications chairman William S. Morris, III (see "Is Jacksonville Jinxed?" page 32), started a vendetta against him because

he is a Democrat and they are Republicans. "Kent supported another candidate and, ever since, he's been after me," says Whitfield.

No one can dispute that the *Chronicle* and *Herald* went after Whitfield last January. On the instructions of publisher Morris, Washington bureau chief John H. Sorrells, Jr. was flown in especially for the project, which was kept secret from the local reporting staff. Although Sorrells's by-line appeared over each of the four segments of the probe, much of the reporting came from briefs and affidavits compiled by the company's attorneys in preparation of its case against Whitfield. After the story ran, Morris himself wrote an editorial that characterized the sheriff's actions as "vile and sluggish" and asked rhetorically, "If the Whitfields' bullying methods had succeeded in muzzling the Augusta newspapers, what freedom would exist in Columbia County? Exactly that freedom allowed by Big Tom Whitfield and no more."

While the Augusta newspapers are depicting the confrontation as a classic First Amendment struggle — "We felt it was our duty to get to the bottom of the truth," says Kent, who served as conservative Senator Strom Thurmond's press secretary for a year and a half before returning to the paper in 1982 — Whitfield claims that the newspapers have "tried, convicted, and sentenced me without giving me a chance to defend myself." In his libel suit, Whitfield portrays himself as an innocent victim who "does not have a medium at his command to rebut or refute malicious articles released to the general public through a newspaper. . . ."

Only one of the probe's four segments set out to refute the libel charges, while the other three were mainly devoted to establishing that Whitfield had laid a trap for Kent when he learned that the editor had been drinking in the lounge of a local Holiday Inn, and that several weeks later the sheriff's twenty-seven-year-old son, Bruce, attacked Kent in



Hit man? After editor Philip Kent (left and below) was beaten in a bar, his paper ran a story implicating Sheriff Tom Whitfield (far left).



The Augusta Chronicle and Herald



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the same bar. The article described how, on the night of September 14, " . . . Whitfield became aware of an opportunity to embarrass Kent because he and a date were drinking at a Richmond County lounge and soon would be entering Columbia County," where the woman lived. The story quoted a deputy who stated that the sheriff ordered him to set up a roadblock and arrest the editor. Whitfield, who admits to having ordered the roadblock, says he did so in order to catch a drug dealer following a tip from an anonymous caller. Nevertheless, he acknowledges that he did tell his deputy that Kent might come along. "I said if he comes along when he's drunk, take him in," Whitfield recalls. Kent was pulled over and arrested, but what the Augusta papers called Whitfield's "trap" was foiled when it was proved that Kent was not legally intoxicated.

As for the attack in the bar, Whitfield denies that his son was involved. The newspaper probe substantiated its account of the episode by quoting an eyewitness; Whitfield, however, points out that Kent had originally identified another man from police photographs and didn't drop the charges against him until shortly before the papers' investigation was published.

The Augusta newspapers' story is for the most part well-documented and convincing, but by the standards of Georgia politics Whitfield's alleged dirty dealings are small change. Only a few days before the Augusta papers ran their story, the sheriff of Richmond County, of which Augusta is the county seat, had been sentenced to prison for obstruction of justice. And a few weeks before that, Augusta Mayor Edward McIntyre had been charged with extortion after FBI agents taped him discussing a bribe from a developer interested in securing a parcel of city-owned land along the Savannah River. The *Chronicle* and *Herald's* coverage of those scandals was, by comparison, routine.

Did the Augusta papers cover the Whitfield story differently because their own interests were at stake? *Chronicle* managing editor W. Howard Eanes denies that there was anything self-serving about the investigation or the wide play it was given. "We investigate whenever we think there's something to investigate," he says. "The facts speak for themselves." Kent himself claims that the coverage of Sheriff Whitfield springs from a proud *Herald* and *Chronicle* tradition. "We have a very aggressive editorial policy with regard to local officials," he says.

John Lancaster

John Lancaster is a reporter for the Atlanta Journal and Constitution.

Uncle Time's cabin?

In September 1981, Gregg Morris, a thirty-two-year-old reporter who had been put out of work by the demise of the *Washington Star*, was being interviewed for a job by the managing editor of the *Louisville Times*. In the midst of the conversation, the telephone rang. To Morris's surprise, the call was for

him. On the line was Edward L. Jamieson, executive editor of *Time* magazine. Morris, who holds a graduate degree in public administration from Cornell University and is black, had come to the attention of *Time* executives while reporting for the Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle* and for the *Star*

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(which had been owned by Time Inc.). In the incongruous surroundings of the *Louisville Times* newsroom, Morris was offered a writing job at *Time*.

On arriving at the magazine's New York headquarters, Morris learned that before he could become a full-fledged *Time* writer, he would have to participate in a twelve-month on-the-job training program (later extended to fifteen months). After finishing the program in December 1982, Morris was told by managing editor Ray Cave that his performance had not been up to *Time*'s standards and that he would never be a great *Time* writer. "He told me to go someplace where I could have some fun," Morris recalls.

Instead, Morris appealed to The Newspaper Guild and the New York State Division of Human Rights, claiming that while at *Time* he had been given no indication that his performance was unsatisfactory to his superiors and that he had been subjected to "racial slights and insults almost every day." Last November, his charges and *Time*'s response

Former writer-in-training

Gregg Morris:

Time was not on his side

were aired at a private conference with an investigator for the New York State Division of Human Rights. If the investigator determines that discrimination might have occurred, the case will be adjudicated either in a federal court or at a public hearing of the State Division of Human Rights. *Time Inc.* denies the charges and is challenging a separate demand for arbitration filed by The Newspaper Guild.

Morris is just one of several prospective minority writers who claim to have been mistreated while they were at *Time*. Of the six minority journalists who have participated in the writer-apprentice program since 1976, only one — a Hispanic — has become a *Time* writer. Not one of the other five apprentices — all of whom are black — remained at the magazine after the fifteen-month training period. "The program only exists so editorial management can cite statistics about how many black writers they have hired when, in fact, none in the program have been placed in the positions they were prepared for," says Key Martin, who is chairman of *Time Inc.*'s 500-member Newspaper Guild unit. "The union's view of the program is that it is a revolving door which destroys the careers of black journalists."

On the face of it, a charge of institutional racism against *Time Inc.* seems difficult to support. A vocal and active proponent of affirmative action, the company has made efforts to recruit minorities for the staffs of each of its seven magazines and for its expanding video companies. At *Time*, where newsgathering and writing are distinct tasks, seven of ninety-five correspondents are black. But at the magazine's New York headquarters, only three of the fifty-two reporter-researchers are black and of the fifteen staff writers, from whose ranks *Time*'s editors have traditionally been recruited, there is only one black, Hunter R. Clark, who joined the staff in October 1981 and did not participate in the apprentice program. Above Clark, there are no blacks on the *Time* masthead. "There is a lockout above a certain point as far as blacks are concerned," says one long-time black correspondent. "There is no interest in integration above a certain level. But," he adds, "*Time* is no worse than any other publication in the country." (At *Newsweek*, for example, five of the magazine's eighty-two correspondents and only two of its fifty-seven writers and editors are black.)

Time Inc. has touted the writer-apprentice program as a way to prepare minority members for higher-level editorial jobs at the magazine. Apprentices generally begin at the bottom of the ladder in the Milestones section

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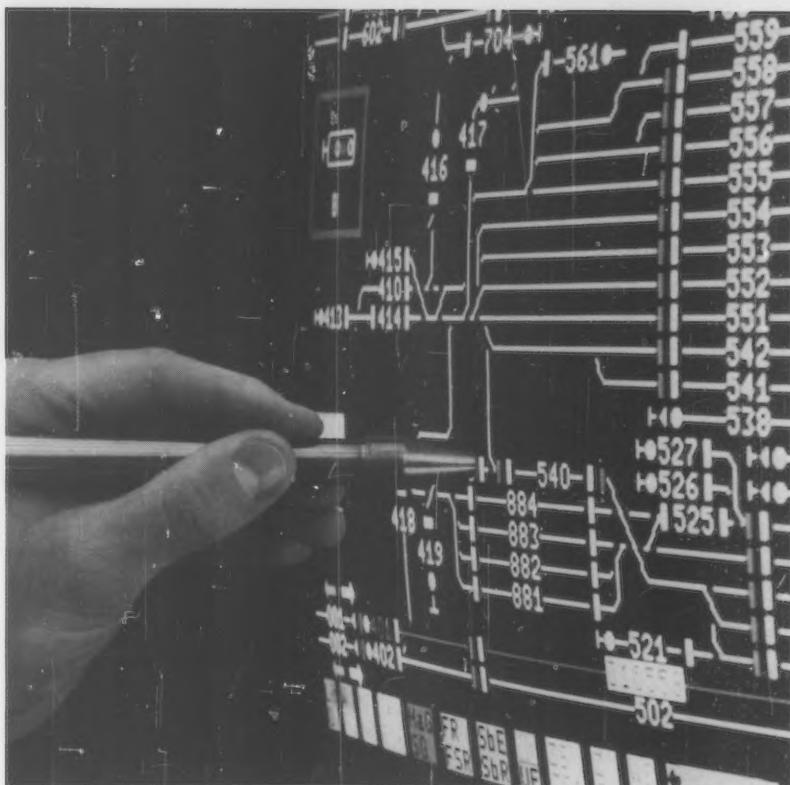
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and rotate from department to department, working with editors and learning how to shape stories in the *Time* manner. "They float you from section to section," says Lorene Cary, who joined the program in 1980 but took a job at *TV Guide* a year later when she says she felt a sense of "doom and destiny."

"The program really crushed me," says Cary. "There is very little supervision; no one wants you to succeed. One goes into the program feeling that the affirmative action efforts are being made in good faith. One comes out feeling that it is only done so that it looks good."

Because the case may soon be in litigation, managing editor Ray Cave would not comment on the program or Morris's allegations. According to a *Time* Inc. attorney, the company is challenging the Guild's attempts to submit the case to the American Arbitration Association because it feels that arbitration would compromise its power to hire and fire. The Guild is taking the line that arbitration, rather than litigation, is the way to resolve the dispute. Meanwhile, Morris, still without a job, is bitter at the way he thinks he was treated. But, he says, the dispute with *Time* is not simply a personal one. "The whole

purpose of the case is not so much for me," he says, "but to end a blatant pattern of discrimination that has been going on for God knows how long."

Charles Ruffel

Charles Ruffel is a student at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism.

Status pro?

Most reporters don't spend much time worrying about their occupational status. But in New York, veteran journalist and free-lance writer William R. Frye is appealing to the state's highest court to certify that he is a professional.

Frye's fight for professional status began in 1979 after the New York City commissioner of finance informed him that he owed \$7,890.06 in back taxes from the years 1966 through 1970. In those years, professionals had been exempt from the city's unincorporated business tax and Frye, whose self-syndicated column, "The World in Focus," has appeared in as many as one hundred and



CJR/Harvey Wang

fifty newspapers around the world since the late 1950s, did not file. The city claimed that, under the provisions of its tax law, self-employed journalists like Frye did not qualify as professionals.

Last August, in a three-to-two decision, the appellate division of the New York State Supreme Court ruled for the city. Justice Ar-

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Old pro William Frye and his briefs

nold L. Fein wrote that Frye, whose journalism experience prior to striking out on his own in 1962 had consisted of an editorship at the *Harvard Crimson* and twenty-one years as a reporter, copy editor, and diplomatic correspondent for *The Christian Science Monitor*, was not a professional because he had never followed a prolonged course of specialized instruction, is not required to have a license, and is not subject to an organized body of rules or standards of professional conduct.

Outraged by the decision, Frye, who had prepared and pleaded his own case, vowed to fight on. Late last year, a prominent New York attorney, Herald Price Fahringer, offered to represent Frye free of charge. The case is expected to be heard by the New York State Court of Appeals this spring.

Although the dispute is somewhat academic — the professional exemption from New York City's unincorporated business tax was eliminated in 1971 — Frye claims that if the decision is upheld thousands of New York free-lancers would be liable for taxes from the 1960s. In addition, says Frye, by establishing licensing as a test of professionalism, the courts would be laying the groundwork for a serious threat to press freedom — the licensing of journalists.

So far, Frye has received support from the New York chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi, which filed an amicus brief on his behalf. And last fall *The New York Times*, to which Frye has contributed articles in the past, editorialized about the case under the headline **FAILURES OF COMMON SENSE**. After relating the history of Frye's stubborn four-year fight, the *Times* said plaintively, "We've always thought of Mr. Frye as a pro." **L.Z.**

Hardball in Phoenix

Most metropolitan dailies choose to ignore criticism from the local alternative weekly, believing, perhaps, that a response may only serve to dignify a lesser journalistic enterprise—and competitor. In Phoenix, the monopoly *Arizona Republic/Phoenix Gazette* has taken this tactic a step farther. Last summer, when a local radio station invited Jana Bommersbach, associate editor of the liberal Phoenix weekly *New Times*, and John Kolbe, conservative political columnist for the *Gazette*, to participate in a "point-counterpoint" series about politics, *Republic/Gazette* publisher Darrow "Duke" Tully forbade Kolbe to appear. In the fall a policy memo was distributed to the staffs of the two papers saying that they could participate "in seminars, programs, interviews, etc. only with employees of other daily newspapers" (emphasis added). "Deviations from this policy," the memo continued, "are subject to prior approval and consent of the publisher."

The edict is the latest salvo in a continuing feud between *Republic/Gazette* management and *New Times*. Hostilities date back to 1977 when Bommersbach, then a *Republic* re-

porter, helped lead a drive to unionize the *Republic/Gazette*. Soon after The Newspaper Guild entered into its first negotiations with management in early 1978, Tully was hired as the papers' new general manager. A former Air Force fighter pilot whose favorite refrain is "I play hardball," Tully and *Republic/Gazette* management succeeded in undercutting the contract negotiations — in part by raising reporters' salaries — until eventually the union drive ran out of steam.

Meanwhile, in 1978, Bommersbach had left the *Republic* to join *New Times*, where her investigative articles contributed to the weekly's growing reputation as a harsh critic of the Phoenix establishment, including Arizona's largest, richest, and most conservative dailies — the morning *Republic* and the afternoon *Gazette*. In 1979, for example, *New Times* published a series of *Republic/Gazette* internal memos revealing that the paper might have been trying to smear a liberal Phoenix politician. Then, the next year, the weekly reported that Guild activists at the papers were planning to file an unfair labor practices charge with the National Labor Relations Board alleging, among other things,



War of the words: Arizona *Republic* publisher "Duke" Tully (below) is fed up with Mike Lacey and Jana Bommersbach, editors at a local weekly.



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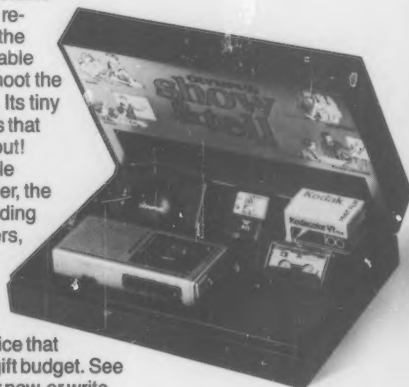
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CHRONICLE

that management was tapping their phones. The *Republic/Gazette* filed a \$10 million libel suit against *New Times* and, according to the weekly's lawyers, attempted to force the paper to disclose its sources. After two years of wrangling, the *Republic/Gazette* agreed to withdraw the suit.

Despite Tully's attempts to put *New Times* down, the weekly has enjoyed a sharp rise in status and circulation. Founded in 1970 at a time when alternative weeklies were springing up around the country, the free, youth-oriented paper has developed from an underground news sheet to a sophisticated, advertising-fat tabloid. Between 1978 and 1983, publisher Jim Larkin increased its primarily eighteen-to-thirty-five-year-old readership from 17,000 to 110,000.

And as *New Times* has matured so has its editor, Michael G. Lacey. "Lacey used to be the one in blue jeans and sandals, running around with red-rimmed eyes," says Max Jennings, executive editor of *The Mesa Tribune*, a nearby suburban daily. "Now he wears twenty-five-dollar ties, four-hundred-dollar suits, and is worried about good government."

Nevertheless, Lacey remains a crusading journalist and one of his favorite targets is Darrow Tully. When the publisher decided to change his name from Clarence Darrow Tully to just plain Darrow Tully in 1981, *New Times* declared, "No one's going to make a monkey out of Phoenix newspaper publisher Clarence Darrow 'Duke' Tully." The following year Lacey proved that he too could play hardball when he almost succeeded in hiring away the *Republic's* Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Tom Fitzpatrick. And as if Tully hadn't suffered enough, last year Jana Bommersbach was named the Arizona Press Club's Newsperson of the Year, the state's highest journalistic honor.

Last fall, Tully struck back. The *Republic/Gazette* launched a new weekly entertainment tabloid inserted in both papers every Wednesday—the same day *New Times* hits the street. The now-infamous memo prohibiting public appearances with *New Times* staff members came a few weeks later. Tully instituted the ban, he says, because he does not want to confuse the public by lending the credibility of the *Republic/Gazette* to a publication that "mixes fact and opinion." "Does *The New York Times* allow its people to appear on panels with *The Village Voice*?" Tully asked rhetorically in a recent interview. (It does.)

Shawn Hubler

Shawn Hubler is the Phoenix correspondent for the Tucson Citizen.



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CHRONICLE

Generation gap in Jersey City

Steven Newhouse, the twenty-six-year-old editor of *The Jersey Journal*, had been on the job at the 67,000-circulation Jersey City daily for only two months when one of his veteran reporters called in with a story that would entangle Newhouse, the paper's union, and the entire staff in a bitter generational dispute over press ethics.

Early last September, Peter Hallam, a forty-six-year-old veteran reporter working in the paper's North Hudson bureau, told Newhouse that he had been asked to testify in the trial of Wally P. Lindsley, the former mayor of Weehawken, New Jersey, a sliver of a town across the Hudson River from Manhattan. Lindsley was charged with conspiracy, attempted extortion, bribery, and obstruction of justice in connection with numerous waterfront development projects from 1978 through 1982. Since it's not every day that a U.S. attorney asks a reporter to testify at a bribery trial, Newhouse asked Hallam the logical question: Why? Hallam admitted that two years earlier he had accepted \$1,000 from some of Lindsley's partners as a "retainer" for future public relations work on one of the waterfront projects. Worried about a conflict of interest, Newhouse says he asked Hallam if he had been reporting on the project when he took the money. When Hallam assured him that he had not, Newhouse let the matter drop.

Six weeks later a young *Journal* reporter had lunch with a friend who had covered the waterfront-project story for the competing Hudson County *Dispatch*. When the *Journal* reporter told his friend about Hallam's claim that he had not covered the project, his friend replied that Hallam had in fact written several pieces about it. "I advised Steve that he had better check the morgue for Hallam's clips," the *Journal* reporter recalls. Newhouse went into the paper's basement, pulled out a dusty, leather-bound volume for the months July-September 1981, and found Hallam's by-lined stories—seven in all. "I fired him the next day," says Newhouse.

To Steven Newhouse, who is working his way toward the top of the huge media conglomerate founded by his grandfather, S. I. Newhouse, the matter was clear. Hallam had crossed the line; he had broken the code. But, some reporters asked, which line? What code? Unlike larger metropolitan papers such as *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post*, the *Journal* has no formal code of ethics advising reporters what kinds of outside work are acceptable. "Conflict of in-

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The (Everett, WA) Herald

THE BAGEHOT FELLOWSHIP

Williams, Colón and Hopkins were 1982-83 Fellows in the Bagehot Fellowship, an intensive program of study at Columbia University for journalists interested in improving their understanding of economics, business and finance. Guest speakers in the wide-ranging curriculum have included Paul Volcker, Murray Weidenbaum, Donald Regan, Felix Rohatyn, Douglas Fraser, Marina Whitman, John Kenneth Galbraith, Robert B. Reich, Irving Kristol, Otto Eckstein, David Rockefeller and Robert Heilbroner.

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CHRONICLE

terest was never defined to me in my sixteen years with the paper," argues Hallam.

When the Hudson County Newspaper Guild—consisting solely of *Journal* editorial employees—held an emergency meeting last November to decide whether or not to challenge Hallam's dismissal, the question divided the members into older and younger, pre- and post-Watergate camps. "The people with gray hair wanted to file a grievance and those in tweed jackets and crew-neck sweaters didn't," says thirty-year-old Guild president John Watson, a general-assignment reporter at the *Journal*. In a close vote, the gray hairs won. But Newhouse refused to reinstate Hallam, and in late January Hallam withdrew his grievance. Returning to the *Journal*, he says, would not be worth the animosity he would have to face from management and some of his colleagues. "Even if I won, they would have made sure that I lost," he adds.

To older *Journal* reporters and editors, Hallam's point is of no small consequence. Several of them struggle to support families on meager salaries—Hallam's, for example, was \$20,000 a year—and look to outside work to supplement their incomes. "The point is that there is no written or consistently followed policy against accepting outside employment, so you can't expect someone to follow guidelines he has not been apprised of," insists one reporter. "You also can't fire him." If Hallam's actions were so clearly unethical, they say, why did Newhouse wait six weeks before firing him?

Newhouse's young supporters argue that the editor delayed simply because he was lied to. To them, Hallam's cloudy judgment—and memory—recalls the *Journal*'s not-so-distant past. For years the paper was known as an unabashed booster of local politicians—a paper which, in the 1960s, supported Hudson County Democratic bosses right up to the time of their indictment for conspiracy and accepting kickbacks. As late as 1981, the *Journal* played catch-up to the more aggressive *Dispatch* on one of the biggest local stories of the decade: the trial and indictment of Union City Mayor William V. Musto.

Since his arrival, Newhouse has been trying to improve both the paper and its tarnished image, an effort his supporters concede has been set back. "It didn't matter whether or not his coverage was affected," says one staff member of Hallam. "The issue is that the mere appearance of his impartiality, and that of the whole paper, was destroyed."

Montieth M. Illingworth

Montieth M. Illingworth is a free-lance writer living in New York City.

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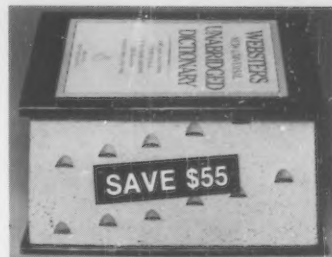
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AT ISSUE

Does the public really hate the press?

by LOUIS HARRIS

Public respect for journalism has fallen dramatically in recent years," *Time* magazine asserted in a December 12 cover story titled "Journalism Under Fire." And, the article went on, "the most vivid indication of the souring attitude toward the press came when the Reagan administration invaded Grenada and excluded reporters from the scene . . . [To many] the lack of coverage seemed inconsequential — even gratifying — as if laryngitis had silenced a chronic complainer."

Among other evidence presented to back up its thesis, *Time* cited viewer reaction to a commentary by John Chancellor of *NBC Nightly News* in which he had criticized the news blackout: "In 500 letters and phone calls to NBC, viewers supported the press ban in Grenada 5 to 1." Newspaper editorials protesting the ban "evoked the same sort of response."

To buttress its claim that respect for the media had plummeted, *Time* cited only one polling result — a poll taken early in the year by the National Opinion Research Center, "which found in 1976 that 29 percent of the population had 'a great deal of confidence in the press,' [but which] reports that this year that figure fell to a new low of 13.7 percent."

Does the public really despise the press — and did the majority of the public, as many journalists now seem to assume, really support the exclusion of the press from Grenada at the time of the invasion? Or did the press panic?

The basic measurement of public confidence in institutions was the invention of the Harris firm working in col-

laboration with *Newsweek*. It started up in 1966; measurements have been made annually ever since. In that first year, confidence in the press was at its zenith — 29 percent. By 1976 it had slipped to 24 percent, roughly equivalent to the National Opinion Research Center's reading that year. By late 1982 it had dropped to an all-time low of 14 percent, comparable to NORC's early 1983 (most of the interviewing was done in March) reading of 13.7 percent, the figure cited by *Time*.

It should be noted, however, that by early October 1983 the public's attitude seemed to be turning around, for the number of those expressing "a great deal of confidence" in the press had by then risen to 19 percent. *Time* either did not take the trouble to seek out a later measure or chose to use a measure that happened to support an underlying premise of the piece — namely, that the public rallied around the Reagan administration's decision to ban the press from the landings in Grenada.

In early December, less than two months after the Grenada invasion, the Harris Survey polled a cross-section of 1,249 adults to find out how they felt about the exclusion of the press from Grenada. The following findings may be of interest:

□ A decisive majority (65 percent to 32 percent) was convinced that "a small group of reporters should have been allowed to accompany the troops when they invaded Grenada in order to report it to the American people."

□ A decisive majority (63 percent to 34 percent) also worried that "by not allowing at least a small pool of reporters to report an invasion, a president or the military might be tempted to cover up mistakes or lives lost."

□ An even larger majority (83 percent to 13 percent) agreed with the view that "in a free country, such as the United States, a basic freedom is the right to

know about important events, especially where the lives of American fighting men are involved."

□ A majority (52 percent to 43 percent) rejected the claim that "the press and TV news pry too much into too many things as it is, so it was good to put them in their place by keeping them out of Grenada."

□ A majority (53 percent to 36 percent) also believed that the country was "better off, not worse off, for having full and complete coverage of the Vietnam War on television and in the press."

The recent slight rise in the public's confidence in the press should, of course, be viewed in the context of the widespread suspicion with which the public has, for a generation now, regarded the nation's major institutions. Thus, our October survey suggests that the press has finally come up to roughly the same level of respect, or disrespect, as, for example, business, in which 18 percent of those polled expressed a "great deal of confidence," or organized religion (22 percent), or Congress (20 percent).

Obviously, the nation's news organizations have a long way to go to recover ground lost since 1966. At the same time, they would hardly seem to have been singled out as prime targets of the nation's scorn. It should be equally obvious that the American people appreciate full press coverage of wars and are even adamant in their insistence on their "right to know."

One other observation seems worth making: most of the media establishment proved to be sadly out of touch in assuming that the public condoned the press ban in Grenada. Those running American journalism must learn *f.r.* better just what the state of public opinion really is. At the very least, this might save them from being panicked again by a relatively small number of phone calls and letters that do not accurately reflect how the public feels. ■

Louis Harris is chairman of Louis Harris and Associates, the polling organization, and author of "The Harris Survey," a syndicated column.

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COMMENT

Winston Smith goes to Washington

The principal figure of George Orwell's 1984, it will be remembered, is a bureaucrat whose job is to revise back issues of *The Times* of London that contain what those who run the nation of Oceania consider to be "errors." In other cubicles, other bureaucrats revise continuously everything already published — "every kind of literature or documentation which might conceivably hold any political or ideological significance."

At home, Winston Smith starts a secret diary. But he is gripped with uncertainty as he writes the date April 4, 1984: "To begin with, he did not know with any certainty that this was 1984. It must be round about that date, since he was fairly sure that his age was thirty-nine, and he believed that he had been born in 1944 or 1945, but it was never possible nowadays to pin down any date within a year or two."

Orwell's totalitarian state had so tampered with the stuff of history that even the calendars were suspect. And the tampering had gone on so long that even Winston Smith, whose job was to revise the past, could not necessarily remember historical fact; he knew only that the official version was not true.

In our time, we may not witness the kind of crude alteration that Orwell depicted, but already we can perceive the beginnings of a similar bureaucratic fiddling with historical reality. Stated one by one, the examples sound almost trivial. A scholar is asked to return, for recording, material obtained under the Freedom of Information Act. At first the material doesn't come back at all; then it returns with eleven pages deleted; only a lawsuit jars loose the batch. An executive order encourages agencies to make material secret after requests to make it public have been received. Agencies are permitted to reclassify material that has previously been made public. Open research material is removed by the government from the shelves of a library. An engineering magazine is ordered to delete an excerpt from testimony delivered before a public session of a congressional committee. Historians report new difficulties in obtaining materials relating to the 1950s. The Justice Department obtains a restraining order to prevent a publisher from printing a judge's opinion delivered in open court; this action is later called an error. (Many of these instances were summarized in a series in *The Boston Globe* — January 22, 23, 24, 1984 — written by Ross Gelbspan.)

But potentially the most powerful grip the present administration may have on future history is its proposal to make secret the output of the minds of thousands of government officials and employees (see "Creeping Secrecy," *CJR*, November/December 1983). Although Congress has delayed

implementation of this policy, which bears the truly Orwellian title of National Security Decision Directive 84, the administration's intent is that all who handle sensitive information should sign contracts binding them for life to clearing what they write and say in public with their one-time employer, the government. Already much discussed as a violation of civil liberties, the policy also presents a danger that much of the raw material of history will ultimately be interred with those in whose minds it resides, should release of this material not meet with the approval of the extant bureaucracy.

It is not too late for public protest or litigation to bring about the revocation or disavowal of such measures. Meanwhile, all such policies point in the same direction — toward official control of the recorded past. American society may never don the grim face of Orwell's Oceania, but in 1984 our leaders seem almost indifferent to the possibility that their actions may bring us to the end of a time when one could assume that, as Winston Smith writes in his diary, "truth exists and what is done cannot be undone."

What's the score in St. Louis?

by STEPHEN R. BARNETT

While competition between metropolitan dailies remains in steady decline, publishers in St. Louis have been foiled — at least for a time — in an effort to kill off one of that city's papers. The episode casts fresh doubt on Congress's "newspaper preservation" scheme.

The Newhouse chain, owner of the morning *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, announced in November that the paper was losing money and would close at the end of the year. This meant few tears for Newhouse, since it was partner with the Pulitzer chain, owner of the evening *Post-Dispatch*, in a profit-and-loss-sharing "agency" agreement. Under that pact, Newhouse would keep its 50-50 share of the profits from the *Post* — swelled by the paper's new position as the only general daily in town — until at least the year 2034.

The announcement was a shock. There are twenty-four such agency agreements in the country, involving forty-eight dailies, and no paper covered by an agreement had failed before. The 1970 Newspaper Preservation Act (NPA) created an antitrust exemption for such pacts, allowing two publishers to merge all their business operations so long as one of the papers was in danger of failing at the time of the

Stephen R. Barnett is a professor of law at the University of California, Berkeley.

agreement and so long as they stay independent on the news and editorial side. The idea was that "separate voices" should be preserved even if economic competition could not be.

The NPA was thus designed to stem the growth of one-newspaper towns, and now it was being used to make St. Louis a one-newspaper town. The act's antitrust exemption had enabled Newhouse and Pulitzer to form their profit-sharing pact, to strip the *Globe* of all its business and production functions (performed for the joint agency by Pulitzer), and then to hatch the plan to kill the *Globe* and share the spoils when that seemed more profitable than publishing both papers. Supporters of the NPA in both the industry and Congress were embarrassed by what *The Wall Street Journal* called a "perverse" development.

But it didn't happen. The Justice Department intervened, ordering Newhouse to seek a buyer for the *Globe*, and Newhouse found one in Jeffrey Gluck, publisher of the *Saturday Review* and other magazines.

Gluck's chances of making it with the *Globe* are not imposing. He had two months to find a printing plant and create a whole business operation, and he faces head-to-head competition with the *Post*, which was set to switch to morning publication on February 27. Both papers, moreover, must vie with the aggressive suburban weeklies that had a lot to do with the troubles of the dailies in the first place (though many say the dailies slept through the raids on their suburban turf).

Despite the sale of the *Globe*, Newhouse still gets its 50-50 share of the *Post*'s profits under the agency pact. If the *Globe* fails under Gluck and can't be resold, Newhouse and Pulitzer will have their one-newspaper town after all.

Whatever happens, Justice deserves credit for blocking this effort to make the NPA a shortcut to monopoly. In cutting Newhouse off at the pass, Justice brandished not the NPA but simply the antitrust laws. The NPA gives publishers an antitrust exemption only so long as they publish two papers. When they plan to close one paper, the act's protection lifts, and the plan is treated like any merger between competitors. This means that killing the *Globe* was legal only if the *Globe* could not be sold, which was what Justice required Newhouse to prove.

Justice's strategy, though, was a high-risk gamble. The department required only that the *Globe* be offered for sale as a free-standing paper — a journalistic skeleton, in fact, shorn of all printing and business functions — which would have to compete fully with the *Post*. Justice might instead have required Newhouse to sell something a good deal more attractive: its share of the joint agency with Pulitzer. Antitrust chief William Baxter gutsily rejected this option because it would only restore a two-paper agency, and not economic competition between the dailies. A second option, insisting that the *Globe* keep its production rights under the agency pact — including the right to morning printing on Pulitzer's presses — was rejected on the ground it would make Pulitzer a "public utility."

Baxter's bet on real competition was not just a long shot;

judged by the industry's conventional wisdom it was crazy. John Morton, a frequently quoted financial analyst of the newspaper industry, pronounced in the *Washington Journalism Review*: "... it does not require bravery to predict that the efforts to find a buyer for the *Globe-Democrat* will come to naught." A news story in *The Wall Street Journal*, relying on Morton's view, reported that "chances of finding a buyer for the *Globe-Democrat* are practically nonexistent." Yet Justice's announcement that the paper was for sale produced some thirty-five inquiries, and in the end not only Gluck but three other prospects — all found qualified by Justice — were apparently willing and able to buy the paper.

If this makes one wonder about the conventional wisdom, one also has to wonder how long Justice's coup will hold up. The *Globe* may well fail under Gluck and give Newhouse-Pulitzer their one-paper monopoly. Some observers charge, in fact, that Newhouse picked Gluck over the other would-be buyers precisely because he was the least likely to succeed with the paper. (Alan Marx, the lawyer who supervised things for Justice, says he saw no basis for this claim.)

If the *Globe* does fail, Justice's go-for-broke policy won't look so good. The next time publishers seek the "easy way out" of an agency, the argument will be stronger that Justice shouldn't let them kill a paper unless they can show that no one will buy it and run it *in the agency* (or at least with joint-production rights). Whatever one thinks of the NPA, it's on the statute books, and this approach might better serve Congress's intent.

What does the St. Louis story mean for other cities? Most plainly, the tough stand by Justice should give pause to other agency publishers wishing to fatten their profits by knocking off one of their papers. The more intriguing message, though, is the doubt cast on the industry line about the impossibility of real competition in cities where papers are published by joint operating agencies. Of the twenty-four agencies, the one in St. Louis was reportedly the only one losing money. Newhouse and Pulitzer claimed business was so bad that they couldn't publish two papers even *with* an agency. St. Louis was thus the worst possible case for finding someone to buy the weaker paper and run it *without* an agency. Yet Newhouse, when forced to try, found buyers ready to do just that.

One thing this suggests is that the St. Louis agency wasn't justified in the first place. If someone was willing to buy the *Globe* and run it competitively — even in the weak state to which the agency had brought it — one has to question the need for an antitrust exemption letting it crawl into bed with its competitor. More important, if this was true of the only agency in the country not making a profit, one has to wonder about the other twenty-three. Since these are profitable and supporting two papers, there's all the more reason to believe that they don't need the NPA's exemption, and that the papers could survive and compete as independent enterprises.

Darts and laurels

Laurel: to *CBS Evening News* and reporter Ned Potter, for an unsweetened report on the questionable safety of aspartame, the recently approved sugar substitute whose marketing name, NutraSweet, has rapidly become a household word, thanks to G. D. Searle & Company's \$120 million advertising budget, no small portion of which was sprinkled on CBS. Stirring together the critical concerns of laboratory scientists, the frightening testimony of everyday consumers, and the unwholesome history of the product's ultimate approval by the FDA, the three-part series (January 16-18) offered plenty of food for bitter thought.

Dart: to *The Kansas City Times*, for a puzzling piece of prurience. In the aftermath of the brutal murders of former *Kansas City Star* assistant business editor Dan Osborne and his wife and son in Fort Wayne, Indiana, the *Times* (the morning sister of the *Star*) dispatched a team of reporters to dig into the mystery and on November 5 published the result: a 6,000-word page-one exhumation of gossip about the couple's most intimate marital problems — problems which had, in fact (and as the article made clear), already been investigated and dismissed by the police as irrelevant to the crime. Decrying "this second destruction of a family" in a November 9 piece in *The Kansas City Star*, columnist C. W. Gusewelle concluded, "There is a devout prayer among us [at the paper] that, when we have the bad luck to die, no one will be found who knew us well or remembered that we ever worked here."

Laurel: to the Sioux Falls, South Dakota, *Argus Leader* for refusing to carry an insert (distributed by the South Dakota Press Association to a number of South Dakota papers) that was designed to look like a four-page tabloid but which was, in fact, an advertisement sponsored by Chem-Nuclear Systems, Inc., to promote its proposal to build a nuclear waste dump in the southwestern part of the state. The *Argus Leader's* offer to pay for the printing of a disclaimer on the 45,000 copies dumped without notice on its doorstep was rejected by Chem-Nuclear management on the ground that the insert was "an informational educational sheet" and not an ad.

Dart: to *The Charlotte Observer*. The paper's January 8 review of a "gentle, insightful, and important" book by Frye Gaillard, Dot Jackson, and Don Sturkey neglected to include three small details: Gaillard works for the *Observer* as an editorial writer, Jackson is a former columnist for the paper, and Sturkey is currently its chief photographer.

Laurel: to Oklahoma City's KOCO-TV, producer Skip Nicholson, and reporter Ramona Russ, for "The Greenwood Blues: Tulsa Race War of 1921," a courageous, caring look at a buried episode that sixty-two years before had left thousands wounded, dozens dead, and thirty-six square blocks of the city's black ghetto burned to the ground. Based upon extensive photographs, eyewitness interviews, and scholarly research, the documentary pierced the unhealthy

silence in which the white community had shrouded the shameful event. Among the Orwellian details: the literal papering over, in the microfilm files of the *Tulsa Tribune* and in the newspaper files of the Tulsa Central Library, of an article in the *Tribune's* edition of May 31, 1921 (the morning of the riot) — an article that, by some accounts, had exacerbated an already dangerously tense racial incident with its approving reference to the white folks' plans "to lynch tonight." In a disingenuous piece about the KOCO-TV documentary, the *Tribune* informed its readers that "there is no such story in the *Tribune's* files," then went on to quote piously from a June 1, 1921 (post-riot), editorial on law and order. The writer of the piece did *not* quote from an editorial published three days later, in which the paper had blamed "the bad niggers . . . the lowest thing that walks on two feet" for what had transpired.

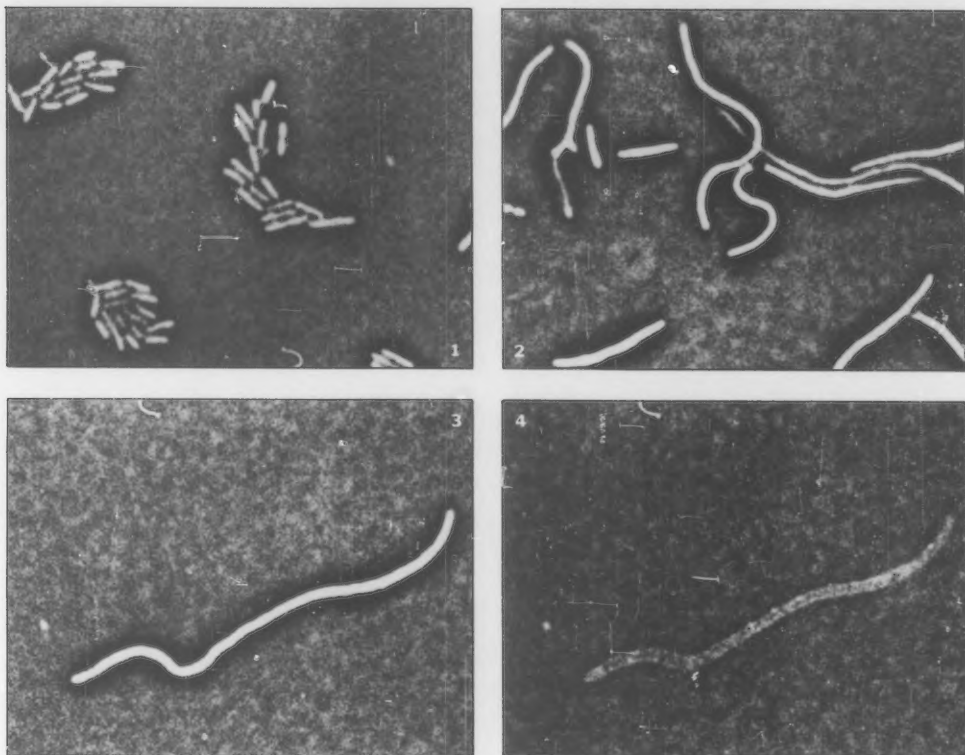
Dart: to the Greenville, North Carolina, *Daily Reflector*, for short-circuited news. The paper's page-one lead story on January 16, by-lined by Susan Bizzaro, warned Greenville residents who were complaining about high utility bills that they were likely to go even higher, and advised them to "blame low temperatures, not high rates" — but neglected to tell them that Bizzaro is on Greenville Utilities' p.r. staff.

Laurel: to *The Boston Phoenix*, for giving Alexander Cockburn a taste of his own medicine. The *Phoenix* revealed to the world (and to Cockburn's editors at *The Village Voice*) that the press critic, who has regularly savaged other journalists and the state of Israel — and who has devoted more than a few column-inches to condemning such possibly compromising arrangements as the funding by Mobil of public TV and the funding by a conservative organization of a study of the liberal attitudes of journalists — had himself sought and been given a \$10,000 grant from the Institute of Arab Studies to write a book about the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. In a 3,700-word farewell column protesting as "unfair" his indefinite suspension from the *Voice*, an unrepentant Cockburn concluded that it was his failure to "properly evaluate the climate of anti-Arab racism" that had been his "bottom-line" mistake.

Dart: to the Bridgeport, Connecticut, *Telegram*, for running a front-page account of the events preceding, including, and following the discovery of damage to the window, glove compartment, and trunk of an automobile parked outside the local high school during an evening basketball game. The car belonged to the *Telegram* reporter who had been covering the game.

Dart: to the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, for its sixteen-page, four-color, 5,000-word, eighteen-photograph (infant-to-statesman) Sunday magazine tribute to the *Globe-Democrat's* 1983 Man of the Year: G. Duncan Bauman, the *Globe-Democrat's* very own editor-publisher; and (as if that were not enough) for its lead story three days later (106-column inches, including three more pictures) giving an account of the award ceremonies and of Bauman's speech. According to the article, the *Globe-Democrat's* 1983 Man of the Year had accepted the honor "with reluctance." ■

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Getting there: women in the newsroom

Gains have been made — often at great cost.
But men still hold the heights

by TERRI SCHULTZ-BROOKS

When I walked into the city room of the *Chicago Tribune* my first day on the job, I saw a sea of white male faces above white rumpled shirts; in true *Front Page* tradition, a few reporters puffed on cigars and a few editors wore green eyeshades. That was in 1968. When I left four years later, things hadn't changed much, and I filed a sex discrimination complaint against the paper. Now, twelve years later, 29 percent of the *Tribune's* general assignment reporters are women. The associate editor is a woman and so is the head of the sports copydesk. "In the old days, women turned on each other; now we turn to each other," says Carol Kleiman, associate financial editor and columnist for the paper, and a member of its women's network. "The only place I'm weak is getting women into the higher positions — running the foreign, national, and local desks. But they'll get there," says James Squires, the *Tribune's* editor.

Gone are the days when women in journalism who wanted to write hard news were condemned to the "soft-news ghettos" of the society, food, or gardening pages, the sections considered second-class journalism by the men who run the papers. Now they not only report on issues of significance to women — from day care to birth control — but also cover the White House and the locker room, the streets of Beirut and the villages of El Salvador. Thirty-six years ago, when Pauline Frederick was hired by ABC as the first woman network news correspondent, she was assigned not only to interview the wives of presidential contenders at a national political convention, but also to apply their on-camera makeup. Today, on most large papers, 30 to 40 percent of the hard-news reporters are women. In television, 97 percent of all local newsrooms had, by 1982, at least one woman on their staffs, as compared to 57 percent in 1972.

Some women have even worked their way into upper management: Mary Anne Dolan is editor of the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*; Kay Fanning is managing editor of *The Christian Science Monitor*; Sue Ann Wood is managing editor of the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*; Gloria B. Anderson

Terri Schultz-Brooks is an assistant professor of journalism at New York University and a free-lance writer.

was managing editor of *The Miami News* until October 1981, when she co-founded the weekly she co-publishes and edits, *Miami Today*. "I remember when there was no such thing as a woman copy editor — the reasoning being that you can't give a woman authority over a man," says Eileen Shanahan, former *New York Times* reporter (one of seven who sued that paper for sex bias) and now senior assistant managing editor of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, the number-three spot on the paper.

One hundred and twenty newspapers now have women managing editors, according to Dorothy Jurney of Wayne, Pennsylvania, an independent researcher and veteran editor whose annual survey of women in newsroom management appeared in the January issue of the *Bulletin of the American Society of Newspaper Editors*. And about fifty of the country's 1,700 daily papers have women publishers, says Jean Gaddy Wilson, an assistant professor of mass communications at Missouri Valley College who, aided by grants from Gannett, Knight, and other foundations, will release in early summer the first results of what promises to be the most comprehensive study to date of women working in the news media.

The limits of change

But serious barriers do remain. "I've seen a lot of change, but it hasn't gone far enough," says Shanahan. Top management jobs in large media corporations are nearly as closed to women now as they were twenty years ago. The situation at *The Washington Post* is fairly typical. The *Post* has beefed up the number of women on its news staff considerably since it reached an out-of-court settlement in 1980 with more than one hundred women there who had filed a complaint of sex discrimination with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; it has even appointed a woman, Karen DeYoung, as editor of foreign news, and another, Margot Hornblower, as chief of its coveted New York bureau. "The number of qualified bright female candidates has never been higher," says executive editor Benjamin C. Bradlee. But there are currently no women staff foreign correspondents, and "there aren't many of us in power jobs," says Claudia Levy, editor of the *Post's* Maryland



Carol Kleiman, associate financial editor, Chicago Tribune

**'In the old days,
women turned on each other;
now we turn to each other'**

Weekly section and head of the women's caucus that negotiated the settlement. While Bradlee says he "sure as hell" plans to move women into top editing jobs, they don't include his. "I've seen ten thousand stories on my possible successor, and none has mentioned a woman," he says.

More than half of the women managing editors are at newspapers of less than 25,000 circulation; at large papers, men still hold 90.4 percent of the managing editorships, Jurney has found. Indeed, only 10.6 percent of all jobs at or above the level of assistant managing editor at all daily and Sunday papers are filled by women. And most of those editing jobs are in feature departments, positions generally not considered "on line" for top management slots, which are usually filled from within the newsroom.

In broadcasting, progress is equally mixed. Ten years ago, there were almost no female news directors. Now, women are in charge of 8 percent of television newsrooms and 18 percent of radio newsrooms. More than one-third of all news anchors are women, but there has never been a solo woman anchor — nor, for that matter, a female co-anchor team — assigned permanently to any prime-time weeknight network news program. Nor is there likely to be in the near future.

On local stations, the news team is usually led by a man with a younger woman in a deferential role. Only 3 percent have survived on-camera past the age of forty; nearly half of all male anchors, on the other hand, are over forty. And only three women over age fifty appear regularly in any capacity before network cameras — Marlene Sanders, Barbara Walters, and Betty Furness. (One reason Christine Craft was pulled from her anchor slot at KMBC-TV in

Kansas City, Missouri, was because she was "not deferential to men." She was also told that, at age thirty-eight, she was "too old" for the job.)

In top broadcast management jobs, many women feel they are moving backwards. A few years ago, NBC had one female vice-president in the news division: now it has none. CBS had four out of eleven; now it has one out of fourteen. "There are no women being coached for key positions," says a female former vice-president of the CBS news division, who requested anonymity. "There's no more pressure from Washington, so anything management does for women it views as make-nice, as charity."

"Women feel fairly stuck," concurs CBS correspondent Marlene Sanders, who has broken a number of broadcast barriers — as the first woman TV correspondent in Vietnam, the first woman to anchor a network evening news show (she substituted temporarily for a man), and the first woman vice-president of news at any network. "We may have to wait for another generation — and hope those men in power have daughters whom they are educating, and whom they can learn from."

Resistance — and revenge

What progress has been made has not come easily. Although Carole Ashkinaze, for example, wanted to be a political reporter, she accepted a position as a feature columnist with *The Atlanta Constitution* in 1976, bringing with her nearly a decade of experience as a hard-news reporter at *Newsday*, *The Denver Post*, and *Newsweek* (where about fifty women filed a sex-bias complaint in 1972). Her first column — about Jimmy Carter's 51.3 Percent Committee, formed to develop a pool of women for possible political appointment — sent ripples of disapproval through the *Constitution's* management ranks. "The editors' reaction was: 'We hope you're not going to do that kind of story as a steady diet,'" she recalls. "But women came out of the woodwork, saying 'Please keep writing about this kind of thing.'" Subsequent columns were about battered women, problems in collecting child-support payments, abortion. She wrote about inequality wherever she saw it, and even began a crusade to get a women's bathroom installed near the House and Senate chambers in the state capitol. While male legislators could run to their nearby private bathroom, listen to piped-in debates, and return to their seats in less than a minute, women legislators had to go to the far end of the capitol building and line up behind tourists in the public restroom. "They finally gave the women a restroom, and the women gave me a certificate of commendation," says Ashkinaze.

After about a year, management gave in to her request and she was moved to the city room as a political reporter, but kept her column, in which she now writes about everything from racism to feminism to the environment. In August 1982, she became the first woman ever appointed to the paper's editorial board. "I'm very proud of it, and very humble, because I realize it's a result not only of my talents, but of what women in the South have been fighting for for decades," she says. "It's wonderful for other women at the paper to see more women here in positions of authority. It's something we've never had before." Fifteen women now

hold editing and management jobs at the paper. "When I came here," Ashkinaze recalls, "these positions truly weren't open to women. Now, even with the political backlash in Washington, there is a much larger awareness here that women are an extremely valuable resource."

Emily Weiner, a coordinator of the women's caucus at *The New York Times*, was hired by the *Times* as an editorial artist in the traditionally all-male map department in December 1978, shortly after the *Times* had settled its class-action sex discrimination suit. (The *Times* agreed out of court to pay \$233,500 and to launch a four-year hiring and promotion program for women.) "I was in the right place at the right time," Weiner says. "There were gold stars out there for *Times* managers who hired women. I am damn good at what I do, but I'm sure there are other good women who wouldn't have gotten this job if they had applied for it earlier."

"The sad part," adds Weiner, "is that the benefits have gone mainly to us younger women, not to those who filed the suits and took the risks, who expended their emotional energy and time and got the wrath of management." As a friend in management told Betsy Wade Boylan, a copy editor on the paper's national news desk who was one of the plaintiffs in the *Times*'s discrimination suit, "The *Times* is not in the business of rewarding people who sue it."

Indeed, more than one woman who has laundered her company's dirty linen in public has found herself writing

'I remember when there was no such thing as a woman copy editor — the reasoning being that you can't give a woman authority over a man'

*Eileen Shanahan, senior assistant managing editor,
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*



CJR/Harry Coughanour/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette



Marlene Sanders, correspondent, CBS

'Women feel fairly stuck. We may have to wait for another generation — and hope those men in power have daughters whom they are educating, and whom they can learn from'

more obits, working more graveyard shifts, subjected to lateral "promotions," and passed over in favor of women hired from outside. But the same kind of shoddy treatment has been too often dished out to women whether they sue or not.

The Butcher treatment and other games

The story of Mary Lou Butcher is a case in point. A few months after graduating from the University of Michigan in 1965 with a political science degree, Butcher was hired by the *Detroit News* to write wedding announcements — the only kind of position then open to women with no prior reporting experience. (Men were trained in the city room.) Determined to move into hard news, she began writing stories on her own time for the city room and, after a year and a half of "pushing and pleading," was transferred to a suburban bureau, a move that gave her a chance to cover local government.

Three years later, after volunteering to work nights as a general assignment reporter, she finally made it into the city room. But after about six years of covering a wide range of stories — for a while, she was assigned to the Wayne County Circuit Court — she was given a weekend shift, normally reserved for new reporters. Men with less seniority had weekends off, but when Butcher — by now a veteran of eleven years — finally asked for a better shift, she instead found a note on her typewriter saying she was being transferred back to the suburbs.

Other women at the *News* had been similarly exiled. In 1972 there were eight women reporters in the city room. When Butcher was "demoted" to suburbia in 1976, she



Carole Ashkinaze, columnist and first woman member of the editorial board, The Atlanta Constitution

'Even with the political backlash in Washington, there is a much larger awareness here that women are an extremely valuable resource'

was the last remaining woman reporter in the newsroom on the day shift; all the others had been moved to the life-style, reader-service, or suburban sections — or had left. When the *News* used its city room to film a TV commercial promoting the paper, it had to recruit women from other departments to pose as reporters.

"When I saw that note, a light finally went on," Butcher says. "I thought: 'Wait. There's something strange going on here.' I had proven myself to be a good hard-news reporter. I saw no reason for being treated like this. It took a long time for it to occur to me that there was something deliberate about what was happening here, that I was the victim of a pattern."

As has been the case with many women reporters, that pattern also appeared in her story assignments. When she volunteered to help report on Jimmy Hoffa's disappearance, she was turned down because, she believes, it was considered "basically a man's story." During United Auto Workers negotiations in the mid-1970s, she — getting much the same treatment as Pauline Frederick thirty years earlier — was assigned to interview the wives of the Ford management team negotiators; the talks themselves were covered by reporters who were male. And when an education official from Washington came to Detroit to talk about how sex stereotyping in schools can lead to stereotyping in jobs, the editor assigned her to cover it because, she recalls, "he said he wanted a light story, and 'we figure we can get away with it by sending you.'" She argued with him and wrote the story straight; it was buried in the paper.

Butcher and three other *News* women eventually sued the paper, which agreed last November in an out-of-court settlement to pay \$330,000, most of which will go to about

ninety of its present and former women employees. Butcher decided to leave journalism because, she says, "My advancement opportunities were almost totally blocked at the *News*. And after filing a lawsuit, it wasn't realistic to think that other media in Detroit would be eager to hire me. Management doesn't like wave-makers." She is now account supervisor for the public relations firm of MG and Casey Inc. in Detroit. "Newspapering is my first love, but I think the sacrifice was well worth it," she says. "Now the *News* is recruiting women from around the country, putting them in the newsroom, and giving them highly visible assignments. I feel really pleased; that's what it was all about."

Not all women feel that their complaints against their employers harm their careers in the long run. "Sure, there may be adverse consequences to signing on to these suits. But there are adverse consequences to being a woman working in a man's world. Some managers may punish you for it, but others believe it shows a certain amount of gumption," says Peggy Simpson, one of seven female AP reporters who last September won a \$2 million out-of-court settlement of a suit charging sex and race discrimination. (The AP, like other defendants cited in this article who have agreed to out-of-court settlements, has denied the charges of discrimination. "But when a company settles for two million dollars, it suggests they had good reason to want to avoid going to court," says New York attorney Janice Goodman, who represented not only the AP plaintiffs but also sixteen women employees of NBC, who won their own \$2 million settlement in 1977. In such settlements, the money is usually divided among the women employees who have allegedly suffered from sex discrimination.)

Still, for various reasons, all the AP plaintiffs have left the wire service for other jobs. Simpson is now economic correspondent for Hearst and Washington political columnist for *The Boston Herald*. Another plaintiff, Shirley Christian, who was on the AP foreign desk in 1973, went to *The Miami Herald* and in 1981 won a Pulitzer for her work in Central America.

It is not only the plaintiffs who may find their jobs on the line. Vocal sympathizers within a company can suffer recriminations as well. When Kenneth Freed, who at the time was the AP's State Department correspondent, won a Nieman Fellowship at Harvard in 1977, he says he was told shortly before his departure that the wire service would not supplement his fellowship money with a portion of his AP salary — a practice it had generally followed up to then. He later learned from friends at AP "that the reason was to punish me for my union activism — especially my role in the suit pressing for women and minority rights. They felt I had betrayed them. After all, I had one of the best beats in Washington and was paid considerably over scale. When I supported the women's suit, it just angered them even more." Thomas F. Pendergast, vice president and director of personnel and labor relations for the AP, says Freed was a victim of circumstance rather than of deliberate ill will. He says AP president and general manager Keith Fuller decided for financial reasons to stop supplementing all fellowships after he took over in October 1976. But



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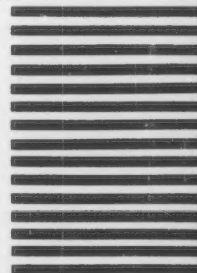
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unfortunate coincidences did not stop there. When Freed was ready to resume his old job after his year at Harvard, he says he was told by his Washington bureau chief that "there was no longer anything for me at the State Department." He adds, "I told them the only thing I *didn't* want to do was cover foreign policy on the Hill and, after that, it was all they offered me." Freed quickly left AP, and is now Canadian bureau chief for the *Los Angeles Times*.

Newspapers and broadcast stations that have agreed to fill goals for women have often failed to meet them. They blame slow employee turnover, and the general doldrums that have hit the newspaper business, for those failures. The *New York Times*, for instance, agreed in its consent decree to give women 25 percent of its top editorial jobs; in fact, only 16 percent had been so filled by 1983. Out of sixteen job categories in which hiring goals were set for women, the *Times* had met those goals in only eight categories — mainly the less prestigious ones. "We feel it has lived up to neither the spirit nor the letter of the law," says Margaret Hayden, counsel for the *Times's* women's caucus.

And numbers can be dressed up to look better than they are. Several women at *Newsday* report that, since the out-of-court settlement in 1982 of a suit filed by four women

**'Some managers
punish you for signing on to a law suit.
But others believe it shows
a certain amount of gumption'**

Peggy Simpson, economic correspondent, *Hearst Newspapers*,
and Washington columnist, *The Boston Herald*



CJ/RH-Harlee Little, Jr.

CJ/RMindy Saunders



Mary Lou Butcher, former reporter, *The Detroit News*

**'It took a long time
for it to occur to me that I was
the victim of a pattern'**

employees, lateral moves by women are sometimes listed as promotions in the house newsletter. And when attorney Janice Goodman inspected the AP's records in 1982, she found that the wire service was giving inflated experience ratings to the men it hired, so that many were starting with salaries higher than those of women with equal experience.

A few years after the Federal Communications Commission started monitoring broadcast stations for their employment practices, the United States Commission on Civil Rights noted in its report, *Window Dressing on the Set*, that the proportion of women listed by stations in the top four FCC categories had risen "a remarkable — and unbelievable" 96.4 percent. In fact, the commission found that, as a result of a shuffling of job descriptions, three-fourths of all broadcast employees at forty major television stations could be classified as "upper level" by 1977, an "artificially inflated job status" that the commission found again in a follow-up report it issued in 1979.

Setting the pace — and pushing hard

Yet even after discounting for such creative manipulation of statistics, the figures do show solid gains for women. At Gannett, the largest newspaper chain in the country, chairman and president Allen H. Neuharth has been a pacesetter at moving women into jobs: its eighty-five dailies now have twelve women publishers, two women executive editors, five women editors, and fourteen women managing editors. Cathleen Black is president of *USA Today* and a member of the Gannett management committee. "For twenty years Neuharth has been working creatively to make it happen," says Christy Bulkeley, editor and publisher of Gannett's *Commercial-News* in Danville, Illinois, and, as vice-president of Gannett Central, in charge of overseeing six of the chain's papers in four states. Neuharth, for instance, sent Bulkeley and another woman to the 1972 Democratic convention, which they saw as an opportunity to "produce enough copy so the all-male staff of the Washington bureau couldn't say we weren't doing our share of the load," Bulkeley.



Christy Bulkeley, vice-president, Gannett Central and publisher, the Danville, Illinois, Commercial-News

'We produced enough copy so the all-male staff couldn't say we weren't doing our share of the load'

eley recalls. Shortly after, the first woman appeared as a full-time reporter in Gannett's Washington bureau.

The AP is now hiring women at a rate equal to men for its domestic news staff. In 1973, when the suit began, only 8 percent of its news staff was female; now it is up to 26 percent, and rising. In 1973, the AP had only two or three women on the foreign desk, a position that prepares reporters for assignments abroad; now six out of seventeen on the foreign desk are women.

At *Newsday*, 41 percent of reporters and writers hired for the newroom over the past nine years have been women. "Before we filed our suit [in 1975] there were no women in the bureaus, no women on the masthead, no women in positions of importance in the composing room," says Sylvia Carter, a *Newsday* writer who was a plaintiff in the suit. "Now, a woman is Albany bureau chief, a woman is White House correspondent; there are lots of women editors, three women on the masthead, and a woman foreman in the composing room."

The most visible gains have been made in cities where women have pushed hardest for them. Take Pittsburgh, for instance. In general, the town "is far and away less than progressive towards women; if someone calls me 'sweet-heart' I don't even notice anymore," says the *Post-Gazette's* Shanahan. But a chapter of the National Organization for Women threatened for several years to challenge local broadcast licenses in FCC proceedings if the city's stations did not improve women's programming and employment. The result: media women are doing very well in Pittsburgh. Today, five women hold top administrative positions at CBS affiliate KDKA-TV, including those of vice-president and general manager. At WTAE-TV, Hearst's flagship station, four women hold top-level jobs. KDKA radio has three women in high executive news jobs, and three women co-anchors. And Madelyn Ross is managing editor of Shanahan's rival paper, the *Pittsburgh Press*.

"When one of the media is a target, it raises other people's consciousness," says ex-*Detroit News* reporter

Butcher. "It has a ripple effect." At the *Detroit Free Press*, for example, the managing editor, city editor, business editor, graphics editor, and life-style editor are all female. (At Butcher's former paper the news editor is a woman and women hold about 30 percent of the editorial jobs.) In addition to Butcher's suit against the *News*, the Detroit chapter of NOW and the Office of Communication of the United Church of Christ also negotiated aggressively for women's and minority rights with local broadcasting stations. Today, two major network affiliates — WDIV-TV and WXYZ-TV — have women general managers.

Pressure on broadcasting stations in the form of FCC license challenges has subsided in recent years, in part because improvements have been made in the broadcast industry, and in part because "we don't have the votes anymore at the FCC, which is now controlled by right-wing Republicans," says Kathy Bonk, director of the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund Media Project in Washington, D.C.

But in many broadcast news organizations a solid groundwork has been laid. "Those women created opportunities for the rest of us, and I will always be grateful for that," says Sharon Sopher, who was hired as a news writer and field producer for NBC in 1973, a few months after several NBC women employees filed a sex-discrimination complaint with the New York City Commission on Human Rights. Sopher became the first network producer to go into the field with an all-woman crew, and has been allowed to do stories previously off-limits to women — from a feature segment on street gangs to a special assignment to cover the Rhodesian war from the guerrilla perspective. Her first independent documentary, *Blood and Sand: War in the Sahara*, aired on WNET in 1982.

'The battle isn't over for equal rights in any profession, including journalism'

Helen Thomas, White House reporter, UPI



Will the advance be halted?

Once at or near the top, women can have significant professional impact on the attitudes of their male colleagues. Richard Salant was president of CBS News in 1975 when Kay Wight was appointed director of administration and assistant to the president. "She made me realize what a rotten job we were doing about hiring and promoting women," Salant says. "She kept at me all the time, in a diplomatic but insistent way, about how few women we had in every department except steno and research." As a result, Salant, who has four granddaughters, began to insist on monthly reports from his subordinates on the numbers of women in each department. "I finally wouldn't approve any openings unless they put in writing what they had done to recruit women and minorities. The paperwork was a pain — but at least it made people conscious of the issues." During his time at the helm (he left CBS in 1979 and is now president and chief executive officer of the National News Council) the number of women in important positions rose dramatically, but not enough to satisfy Salant, who maintains that his greatest disappointment is that "I never got a woman on *60 Minutes*." (Salant was among the first members to resign from New York's all-male Century Club over its discriminatory policies. Similarly, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, chairman of the board of *The New York Times*, warned his top executives last year that, as of January, they would no longer be reimbursed for expenses incurred at the club.)

When *Chicago Tribune* editor Squires was Washington bureau chief for the paper, Eileen Shanahan, then with *The New York Times*, and Marlene Cimmons of the *Los Angeles Times* convinced him to join them in a project to eliminate sexism from the AP and UPI stylebooks. They "raised my sensitivity about women's issues above what I ever thought it could be raised," he says. Now, many women at the *Tribune* feel they have an ally in Squires. "The pioneer women in journalism were friends of mine — Nancy Dickerson, Eleanor Randolph, Elizabeth Drew," he says. "A lot of them had a rough time just because they were women. And seeing what has happened to them makes me feel I have to take steps to overcome the problems of the past." But performance can lag far behind promise. Five major editing jobs opened last year at the *Tribune* — managing editor, copydesk chief, metro editor, assistant metro editor, and national editor — and none of them went to a woman.

"The battle isn't over for equal rights in any profession, including journalism," says Helen Thomas, UPI's veteran White House reporter, who has covered six presidents and toted up a number of firsts — first woman president of the White House Correspondents Association, first woman officer of the National Press Club, first woman member of the Gridiron Club. Yet she remains optimistic. "It is impossible for women to lose what we've gained," she says. "We're now secure in our role as journalists — we just have to expand that role."

"We're fighting against enormous odds," says Joan Cooke, metro reporter for *The New York Times*, chair of the *Times* unit of The Newspaper Guild of New York, and a plaintiff in the suit against the *Times*. "Look at the mast-



Joan Cooke, metro reporter, The New York Times

'Look at the masthead. That's where the power is, and they're not going to give up power easily'

head. [Out of seventeen people listed, two are women.] That's where the power is, and they're not going to give up power easily. And most women don't want to devote all their extra energy to equal rights — they want to go home like everybody else, to be with their families or friends. But if the spirit is there, and the will is there, it can be done." Sylvia Carter, a *Newsday* writer who was a plaintiff in the sex discrimination case against her paper, advises women to "be tough, keep your sense of humor, and form a women's caucus — but don't do it on company time."

Slowly, discrimination is easing as men see that women can do the job. The courage, persistence, and sheer hard work of women journalists have made these changes possible. But, at too many news organizations, women have yet to scale the topmost peaks; despite their increasing visibility, they do not have much more power than before. And the important question is: Will they ever? In the past, government pressure in the form of lawsuits and the threat of revoking broadcast licenses forced the news media to give women a chance. Now, in the hands of a conservative administration, the tools by which that pressure is exerted — the EEOC and the FCC — are being allowed to rust. It is up to the news media, then, to spur themselves on toward greater equality in the newsroom and resist the temptation to backslide into the patterns of discrimination that have limited and punished women because of their sex. ■

Is Jacksonville jinxed?

The city's two papers were kicking the booster habit.
Then along came Billy Morris

by BILL CUTLER
and MITCHELL SHIELDS

“There’s no mistaking the mood of the newsroom, and it is bitter disappointment,” WJXT-TV in Jacksonville reported on November 18, 1982, following the announcement that Morris Communications Corporation had bought the city’s morning and evening papers. Reporters at *The Florida Times-Union* and the *Jacksonville Journal* stood around in “stunned silence,” one television newsman recalls. “They felt like they had been betrayed, sold down the river, virtually all of them.” The hopes raised the previous August by news that Jacksonville’s embattled dailies were for sale had been dashed. *Times-Union* and *Journal* people had been assured that money would not be the sole criterion in selecting a buyer. Reputation and integrity would also be considered. The hope had been that a paper of the stature of the *Los Angeles Times* or *The Washington Post* would purchase the two dailies and give them a much-needed boost in credibility. Instead, when the sale was announced it was obvious that money had been what mattered.

The sum changing hands in the transaction was the largest ever paid for a pair of local papers, some \$211 million, yet the winner was the least known and least respected of the four bidders. William S. “Billy” Morris, III, of Augusta, Georgia, president of Morris Communications, had acquired a reputation as a shrewd businessman who ran newspapers solely for profit and to hell with anything that got in the way of a buck, including responsible newsgathering. Whatever possibility the Jacksonville papers might have had to redeem their own tarnished reputation seemed to have vanished with their purchase by Billy Morris.

Bill Cutler and Mitchell Shields are freelance writers who live in Atlanta.

The son of a man who worked his way up from bookkeeper at *The Augusta Chronicle* to owner of Augusta’s two dailies, Billy Morris was made assistant to the publisher shortly after graduating from the University of Georgia’s school of journalism in 1956. While his father was still alive, Billy expanded the family business, taking over Savannah’s two dailies in 1960. He went on to acquire or start dailies in Athens, Georgia, in Juneau, Alaska, and in Lubbock and Amarillo, Texas; four weeklies; a free-distribution shopper in Tampa; four printing companies; and the *Quarter Horse News*. Disagreements within the Morris family about the running of the business led to protracted and messy lawsuits that pitted Billy against his mother, his brother, and his sister. In 1970 the altercations ended with Billy buying out their interests.

Even his detractors cannot deny his charm. Of a build slight almost to gauntness, the forty-nine-year-old Billy is soft-spoken, with a distinct magnolia lilt to his voice. Like most newcomers to great wealth, he attaches considerable importance to symbols of success. He raises horses and flies around in private airplanes and enjoys the social and financial advantages of membership in the exclusive Augusta National Golf Club. On one of his three plantations near Augusta he enjoys entertaining in a style reminiscent of the Old South, with black singers crooning antebellum favorites. He serves on the boards of directors of the Associated Press, of The Southern Company, a mammoth utilities holding firm, and of its Georgia subsidiary, Georgia Power Company.

Prior to the Jacksonville purchases, properties owned by Morris Communications had a combined circulation of only 341,000. The morning *Times-Union* (circulation 158,000) and afternoon *Journal* (circulation 44,000)

boosted the corporation’s total by nearly 60 percent. Jacksonville’s proximity to Georgia and the absence of any significant papers between that coastal city and the Morris properties in Savannah provide a rationale for the purchase (“It’s in our backyard, so to speak,” Morris comments). The Jacksonville papers’ 22 percent pre-tax profit margin was a strong inducement, and the chance to beat out Gannett made the purchase even more attractive. Earlier in 1982, Gannett had topped Morris in the competition for two papers in Jackson, Mississippi, bidding \$110 million. This sum came to \$839 per subscriber; Morris exceeded this amount by over \$150 per subscriber in Jacksonville.

Of the Florida competition, Morris says, “We didn’t have any idea we could outbid those guys. My money was on Gannett. But they whipped us in Jackson, and I ended up with this one. So I guess that’s fair play.” As it turned out, Gannett’s offer — reportedly \$137 million — was the next to the lowest of the four final bids. Cox Enterprises’ reported offer was \$170 million; Capital Cities’, about \$120 million. For top dollar, Morris had no close competition.

What he got for his money

These figures reflected the appeal of a monopoly enterprise in a growth market, not the glamour of topflight newspapers. The Jacksonville dailies, in fact, had for many years been the laughingstock of Florida journalism, due in large part to their ownership by the powerful and influential Seaboard Coast Line Industries, which also controlled the merged Atlantic Coast Line and Seaboard Railroads, as well as the Louisville and Nashville Railroad. The common joke in the region was that trains never hit cars in the Jacksonville papers; cars always ran into trains. One critic described the *Times-Union* and *Journal* as “reac-

tionary and crustacean, a journalistic caboose oblivious to the times."

The extent to which the two dailies had catered to the community's dominant business interests was detailed by former *Times-Union* reporter Sean Devereux in a long piece for the *Columbia Journalism Review* ("Boosters in the Newsroom: the Jacksonville Case," January/February 1976). Devereux's article was a major embarrassment to the Florida Publishing Company, the corporate subsidiary of Seaboard Coast Line Industries that ran the Jacksonville papers. A new publisher was brought in, followed by a new editor and managing editor. The overhauled news staff had extensive wire-service experience. "We were never allowed to lose sight of what we were supposed to do," recalls Pat Yack, who joined the *Times-Union* as a reporter in 1978. "Devereux's story was pinned up over the coffee pot so that every time we got a cup we were reminded what we were up against."

One of the newcomers was Darrell Mack, hired in August 1977 to head the *Times-Union*'s newsroom. His assignment, he recalls, was to "get good, solid reporting. Not bending either way. We don't want to look under every rock for a snake, but we don't want to kiss ass either and be a chamber of commerce paper. We weren't a *Washington Post* or *Miami Herald*, but we came from where we were pretty much a mouthpiece for people with influence and had little credibility. We got to the point that you couldn't have a story get in or killed because of who you were or who you knew."

In 1978 Mack hired as city editor of the *Times-Union* Paul K. Harrel, an assignment editor at WMAQ-TV, NBC's Chicago station. "It was absolutely the most exciting job I ever had in my life," says Harrel, now editor of *Jacksonville Monthly* magazine. "We went into fairly hard-ass newspapering right off the bat, ball-to-the-wall-type journalism." Even so, Harrel found the Jacksonville papers to suffer from "image problems" of a magnitude he could scarcely comprehend. "I mean, I worked for bad papers in my time, but nobody ever thought about it." In Jacksonville, he was "constantly aware of what people had thought about the newspaper in the past."

Perhaps this was because the *Times-*



Pam King/images

Empire builder: Publisher William S. Morris, III, beat out Gannett and more than doubled the circulation of Morris Communications properties by buying up Jacksonville's dailies for some \$211 million.

Union had not entirely freed itself from the kinds of influences that had debilitated it in the past. The new publisher, J. J. Daniel, was a real-estate and mortgage-banking mogul, one of the state's ten most powerful people, according to a *St. Petersburg Times* analysis. Though Daniel's integrity was above reproach, he was, in Darrell Mack's view, "gunshy" and "too nice a person to be in the position he was. He couldn't understand why, when someone he went to church with who was a good person died, he couldn't get a big obit in the paper." Daniel's lack of practical newspaper experience made him vulnerable to community pressures. *Journal* reporter Deborah Bruner recalls being summoned into Daniel's office and, in the presence of a man whose business practices she was investigating, being ordered to reveal both her sources and her information. (She managed not to.)

Equally disturbing was management's reaction to an investigative series in

1979 on a controversial bridge project opposed by environmentalists but supported by influential business interests. Reporter Michael Dillin's coverage, which detailed the project's anticipated costs, resulted in orders to Paul Harrel to change Dillin's beat. "I moved him to beaches for eighteen months, then brought him back to city hall," Harrel recalls. While incidents like this undoubtedly helped to foster timidity in the newsroom, in Harrel's view reporters were timid by long tradition. "I think there was more of an air of sacred cows in town than there were sacred cows," says Harrel. "But that doesn't matter. If you think the sacred cows are there, they are there. I'd assign writers to stories and I'd get back the story and it would be very soft. I'd say, 'Let's toughen this up.' And they'd say, 'Well, that's the story.' What was happening is that they were pulling their punches from the very start because they thought they had to, and the truth is they didn't have to."

Indeed, substantial improvements had been made in the papers. Darrell Mack initiated significant salary increases, which were continued by editor Robert P. Clark, who had been brought in from the Louisville *Courier-Journal* to boost the papers' reputation. Clark worked hard to improve the writing and graphics. More important, he developed a state-of-the-art ethics code that helped to improve morale. Still, there was the stigma of being part of the Seaboard Coast Line empire. Until the papers got out from under the railroad's shadow, most staff members believed, news coverage would always be suspect. As a result, when the plan for the sale was announced in 1982, "people were as happy as children at a birthday party," recalls an editor still at the Jacksonville papers, who asked not to be identified. "They were thinking only about the good chains. They didn't think of the Morris or the Scripps-Howards or the Newhouses. I was one of the dissenters there. I tried to remind them what could happen."

Operation Promo starts up

When Morris emerged as the new owner, reporters checked with colleagues who had worked at Morris papers in Augusta and Savannah. The condemnation appeared universal. Rumors started flying. The news budget would be slashed by 40 percent. Morris's ultraconservative political philosophy would be imposed on news stories. No hope of investigative journalism. Boosterism would replace news reporting. Salaries would be cut to help Morris meet his debt obligations on the astronomical purchase.

The rumors seemed to be validated by reports aired by Jacksonville's WJXT-TV during the days before and after the purchase announcement. A survey of professors at five schools of journalism who were asked to rank the four companies competing for Jacksonville's dailies showed Capital Cities, Gannett, and Cox almost neck and neck, in that order. Morris was not even close, getting less than half the votes of Cox. One journalism professor interviewed by the television station gave it as his opinion that Morris's Augusta operation was the worst paper in the history of the planet. Fears of a return to boosterism were



Bruce Lipsky/Florida Times-Union

The power of 'positive' reporting: A Jacksonville councilman (left), pleased with the "positive attitude" of the city's papers, renews his subscription.

As general manager James Whyte accepts the check, publisher Morris beams in the background. The city council commended the papers for running a 42-part "Proud City" series, one that dismayed many reporters.

heightened when, following a press conference, Jacksonville's mayor, Jake Godbold, mentioned a meeting with Morris in which the publisher had asked what he could do that would be positive for the city. That was the kind of media the city needed, the mayor said.

These fears remained purely hypothetical until March 1, 1983, when the news staff was told that James Whyte, brought from Morris's Amarillo papers to become general manager in Jacksonville, wanted the staff to prepare a forty-two-part promotional program called "Florida's Proud City." For forty-two consecutive days, a different aspect of Jacksonville was to be highlighted in a full-page ad containing art and a "news" story written in a "positive" style. When one editor still at the papers first heard of the series, he commented off the record, "I'm disgusted. I'm really disgusted. I don't think there's a respectable newspaper in the country that would do that. We've never been flat ordered to slant the news, which we're going to do with this thing."

To Whyte, such a promotional campaign is standard operating procedure for Morris Communications. "We've done it in Amarillo and Lubbock and Savannah and Augusta in various ways. We know people respond to that. The scope of things in a community is such that the average resident isn't always aware of the various advantages the community has. So at our expense we run this pro-

motional series." After publication in the paper, Whyte explains, the pages are reduced to folder size and distributed to "any agency in town that is seeking to promote the growth and development of the community."

The news staff complained bitterly to management about its forced participation in the "Proud City" series. As a result, editors were asked to corral volunteers. General assignment reporter Kevin Bezner was one of those who swallowed his pride and dashed off two "Proud City" pieces "as a joke." He did so, he said later, to save his colleagues who were working on serious stories from having to interrupt their investigations.

Why are all these folks leaving?

Even such a distasteful assignment did not disillusion Bezner about his new bosses. He had thought the initial response to news of the Morris purchase was "overreacting." When some thirty newspeople he respected left during the next four months, his reaction was, "They're not giving Morris a chance." Bezner explains, "I had met Morris when he came initially, and I saw him down in Tampa, where he gave an eloquent speech before the Florida Press Club about how all the newspapers in Florida ought to get together and make sure that the open-records law isn't violated. It was tremendous, and I was really proud that he was there."

Bezner's disenchantment began after Morris Communications announced last April that the staffs of the two dailies would be merged. Even under joint ownership, the staff of the afternoon *Journal*, where Bezner worked, considered itself in brisk competition with the *Times-Union*. In the view of Dave Butler, who was brought in as managing editor of the *Journal* by Bob Clark with the assignment of saving the failing afternoon paper, the *Journal* was "more aggressive and enterprise-oriented" than the *Times-Union*. Butler quit the Jacksonville papers, however, to take a position as metro editor of the *Rocky Mountain News* three days before the staff merger was announced; for Butler, the "Proud City" series was the last straw. "The corporate policy of Morris Communications is one of community booster," he says. "They make no bones about that."

Lynn Bronikowski, formerly assistant city editor at the *Journal*, is now also on the staff of the *Rocky Mountain News*. Bronikowski left Jacksonville last November, "one of the last holdouts after the mass bail-out," she says. "It was a frustrating situation," she adds. "I had worked for the *Journal*, which was the livelier of the two papers. We were the terriers, snapping at the *Times-Union*'s feet. We were the terriers snapping at most of the politicians' feet, and then the philosophy completely reversed itself, and the papers were not terriers any longer. We became the official paper of record. It was an attitude of not upsetting anybody, any city officials, not rattling any cages."

Several of Bronikowski's former *Journal* colleagues who have remained in the Jacksonville newsroom echo her sentiments. They call the paper's overall coverage "embarrassing," "superficial," "episodic," "super-boosterism." A common complaint is, "All we do is cover meetings." The mass exodus of experienced editors, *Journal* reporters say, has resulted in "amateurish" and "disorganized" management of the news. Journalists at the papers and at WJXT-TV claim that they read *The Miami Herald* for Jacksonville news. "We're all disgusted," comments one seasoned investigative reporter who says he was given no encouragement to follow up an exciting story involving public

corruption. "I wouldn't give them a new idea if my life depended on it. Honest to God, if the mayor got shot right next door, I'd drive right on by."

For Kevin Bezner, who remains on the staff of the merged papers, December 7, 1983, marked a turning point in his attitude toward his bosses. On that date, general manager Whyte called a meeting to let the staff air its disgust with management's decision to run half-page ads on the Lifestyle section front. "I wanted to give Whyte the benefit of the doubt, same as Morris," says Bezner. "But the way he presented himself in that meeting, I cannot give that man the benefit of the doubt. It was too arrogant. He cares only about advertising, not reporters or readers. 'You can all quit today, and I can find people to replace you,' was his attitude. That was a real shock. Whyte still doesn't realize that he has, in this community, an astute reading public that wants a good newspaper product. Now I say to myself, if Morris is so smart, why does he have Jim Whyte in charge of these companies?"

The question is not hard for former managing editor Dave Butler to answer. "Billy Morris takes more progressive public positions about a newspaper's role in the community, but he uses Whyte as his hit man." In Butler's view, Morris and Whyte share the philosophy that their business is "a family operation, where people stay together and get to know each other. What do they care if some of the more vocal, outspoken people who don't like it there leave? They're happy." The eventual aim, Butler and others believe, is an operation staffed by people with long and deep ties to the local community, who do not want to see the boat rocked.

So far, the company has backed off from stands that have aroused strong opposition. At the December 7 meeting, Whyte announced a halt—at least temporarily—in ads on the Lifestyle section front after only two such appearances. While Whyte emphasized management's displeasure with the type of the ads given such prominent position (waterbeds and lingerie were among the featured items), the reversal of policy left some in the newsroom hoping that their vocal opposition had influenced the decision. In

the words of one editor who has remained cautiously optimistic through the first stormy year of Morris ownership, "Everybody's kind of saying, 'We're getting along okay, but what are they going to try next?'"

For better . . . or for worse?

This same editor bases his optimism on Morris's handling of the news budget. Despite widespread fears of cuts, the budget announced last September gave the news staff a higher percentage of what they wanted than they had received in the past few years under railroad ownership. The Washington bureau has been expanded from one to three persons (and now serves all of the papers in the Morris chain), and a two-person investigative news team that was set up last fall has produced a continuing look at mental-health services in northeast Florida. Says Deborah Bruner, one of the team's members, "The editors appear to be interested in hard-hitting reporting, and they're giving me the time, resources, and support I need. I'm very encouraged."

Another encouraging sign to some reporters is that executive editor Fred Hartmann remains at his job. Hired before the Morris purchase as managing editor of the *Times-Union*, Hartmann is generally respected in the newsroom. In the opinion of one *Times-Union* reporter, Hartmann's presence is "the final key. As long as he stays, things aren't going to get too bad. But if he decides to leave, you'll see a lot of people leave with him."

The morning paper looks snappier now, since daily color photography, which Bob Clark had augmented to jazz up the *Journal*, has been extended to the *Times-Union*. Reporter David Bailey thinks that the morning paper "is slowly getting better." Whyte does not meddle in the newsroom, according to Bailey, who adds, "The sacred cows of the Daniel regime are dead."

This last position is objected to strenuously by the departed Dave Butler. "Frankly, any editor there who says that now is a lying s.o.b.—and I hope you get that quote down directly. The overall point of view of the ownership is to be pro-chamber of commerce, pro-big business. And that's much more damning than the old situation." ■

Downtime for labor

Are working people less equal than others —
or is labor just a dead beat?

by MICHAEL HOYT

At 12:01 A.M., November 1, All Saints' Day, the Chrysler Corporation's stamping plant in Twinsburg, Ohio, suddenly fell silent. Members of United Auto Workers Local 122 shut down their machines for a strike. As the door panels, floor pans, and other parts they produce stopped flowing across the country from Twinsburg, the only source of supply for these parts, half a dozen Chrysler assembly plants fell silent too.

In New York that night, on *NBC Nightly News*, Tom Brokaw called it a "wildcat strike" — an unauthorized walkout. On the other coast, a *Los Angeles Times* editor changed the first paragraphs of the Detroit bureau's story, making it "Robert Weissman's strike," a walkout "almost singlehandedly" engineered by Weissman, the president of the Twinsburg local union. The alterations made the story conform more closely with other coverage around the country, which implied that a pack of militants in Twinsburg was knocking Chrysler down just as the company was getting up off its knees.

That was Chrysler's line on the strike, but it was just one way of looking at it. Weissman, a man who does not "regard the title of militant as a smear," has few fans among the top leaders of the UAW. But authorization for his local's strike had been carefully cleared through the union's regional director, its Chrysler director, and its new president, Owen Bieber, following fifteen fruitless months of local bargaining. As often happens in labor stories, a lot of good questions went unasked in Twinsburg.

For example, what was the strike about?

Oil is one answer: it dripped from the machines, according to UAW spokesman David Mitchell, and was all over the floor — not a good idea around stamping machines. In the end, Chrysler agreed to add a dozen janitors to clean it up.

Forced overtime is another: Marc Stepp, director of the UAW's Chrysler department, had been urging Chrysler to reopen a shut-down stamping plant in Detroit instead of working the Twinsburg workers seven days a week, some of them for many months. But Chrysler said no, leaving itself a tired and angry work force — and just one source of supply for vital car parts.

From Weissman's little-reported point of view, Chrysler was on the warpath, trying to follow Ford and General Motors down the road to cheaper local contracts, starting with Twinsburg. "This was a defensive strike," he says. "There was no pioneering." He thinks Chrysler misread the UAW's resolve, a \$50 to \$90 million mistake.

John Holusha touched on some of these subjects in his story in *The New York Times* of November 5, 1983. They are angles any good writer might pursue in a labor story. But good labor journalists are an endangered species. The strike in Twinsburg, at least, was covered; a lot of good labor stories are simply ignored. A rich harvest goes to waste.

Why? "I would not suggest for a minute that there is some conscious bias," says A. H. Raskin, who for years was the dean of labor reporters from his desk at *The New York Times*. "It's just that labor is a much less significant element in terms of shaping policy or even innovating in terms of its own problems. People are bored with the trade union movement."

This definition of the beat makes Raskin's successor, William Serrin, uncomfortable. "So many labor stories are just vitally important to American life," Serrin says. "Workers had problems in the past and they have problems now. Covering labor is not writing about Lane Kirkland; it's writing about a hundred million people in the work force. How can a hundred million people be boring?"

How, indeed, particularly when anyone with half an antenna senses the close of a long, comfortably dull chapter in American work-life? Global banking and world trade, robots and computers, a shift in corporate strategy or a higher profit goal, the falling price of copper or the rising

'People are bored with the trade union movement.'

A. H. Raskin, formerly of *The New York Times*



Michael Hoyt, a former reporter for *The Record* in Bergen County, New Jersey, has written about labor for several publications.

dollar abroad — forces outside of workers' control suddenly loom larger in their lives. There is a feeling of a shift in the balance of power, a serious weakening of workers' only collective voice, the unions. Who knows what's slouching our way? Whatever it is, it's not dull.

'They just don't seem to know what to ask'

Labor reporting is not uniformly bad. Much of the better stuff is to be found in some of the country's most upscale publications, such as *Business Week*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, and the *Los Angeles Times*, and, on the air, in segments of *The MacNeill/Lehrer Newshour* and National Public Radio. There is some good labor writing, too, in places like Detroit and Chicago, Omaha and Kansas City. Still, it is hard to find a kind word about most labor journalism from anyone these days. "Reporters don't understand the language, texture, or history of labor relations. They just don't seem to know what to ask," comments Larry Rubin, who has answered "off-the-mark" questions from journalists for three different unions, most recently the Machinists, over the past fifteen years.

Among the harshest critics of labor journalism are its practitioners: "Today, the labor writer is a tired guy without much history or background, who doesn't go to the factories," says a labor writer from one of the country's top newspapers, who requested anonymity. "It's not a beat with much prestige," adds Mike McGraw, a labor reporter for *The Des Moines Register* and labor editor of *The Kansas City Star* before becoming a bureau chief at the *Star*. "General-circulation papers just don't cover it very well."

While business coverage is on the rise, labor journalism is declining in quantity and quality. "It has been declining for a long time, probably since the 1950s," says John Hoerr, an associate editor at *Business Week* who specializes in labor. The *San Francisco Chronicle*, which in the 1940s had two labor writers, has no one with that title now, though management says labor issues are handled by its three-person economics team. *The Kansas City Times* recently combined its labor beat with transportation. *The New York Times*, according to Raskin, has far fewer reporters available with expertise in labor than it did in years past. And "many papers just stopped covering organized labor," Raskin says.

Even in stories that receive a great deal of attention, like the Greyhound strike, we are getting coverage with holes big enough for a bus to turn around in.

What is the Greyhound Corporation, for example? Many stories gave no clue that it is not just a bus company, that it began to diversify some fifteen years ago into fields ranging from soap manufacturing to Burger King hamburgers, and that its bus-manufacturing division still sells buses to some of Greyhound Lines's competitors.

Who is John W. Teets, who took the wheel at Greyhound two years ago? What does he do to earn his \$425,000 salary, plus bonuses, directors' fees, etc.?

What is the history and makeup of the Amalgamated Transit Union, which represents the bus line's drivers, ticket sellers, mechanics, maintenance workers, and baggage handlers? So badly beaten, why did it seem so poorly prepared?

Earl Dotter/American Labor



***'Covering labor is not writing about Lane Kirkland.
It's writing about a hundred million
people in the work force.
How can a hundred million people be boring?'***

William Serrin, labor reporter, *The New York Times*

Even the heart of the story, the bargaining issues, was not always handled well. The *Chicago Tribune*, on November 2, got the story exactly backwards, saying the bus line's employees would strike "unless a demand for higher wages is met by the carrier." Most publications focused on Greyhound's original demand for a 9.5 percent wage cut, although the company was also demanding major concessions in benefits and rules of work. "A lot of coverage overstated the company's plight, understated what the company wanted from the workers, and completely missed the part-time workers issue [the company wanted to hire part-time employees with reduced benefits], which is a big, big deal," comments Bob Arnold, the labor editor for *Business Week*.

Virtually all of the broadcast and print stories noted that profits at the bus line were flat recently; many noted the reasons: the recession's effect on bus ridership, competition from the newly deregulated airlines, and a fare war with Trailways. Few went farther to point out that two of these problems — recession and fare wars — were probably temporary, or that Greyhound had enthusiastically supported bus-line deregulation, which may increase its profits in the long run.

The union did not make balanced coverage easy. At one point, for instance, the union declared a news blackout after Greyhound had plastered the country with full-page newspaper ads. Reporters with the time and talent talked to local union leaders, who sometimes have as much information as the top leaders, and may be more willing to share it.

There are independent sources, too, with information that can add dimension, making reporting more than merely pitting two sides against each other, and enabling the reporter to challenge what he's told. "I find," says Henry Weinstein of the *Los Angeles Times*, "that to do this job best it's

necessary to give yourself a crash course in the economics of various industries, to talk to Wall Street analysts, academics, and so forth." This kind of reporting illuminates forces behind the struggles at the bargaining tables, from imports to deregulation to the cost of money. "If a company is in trouble, for example, its interest rates [for loans] go up," says Ray Rogers, whose Corporate Campaign, Inc. describes itself as a pro-labor consulting firm. "So the workers get less and the bankers get more. It doesn't make much sense, but nobody writes much about it."

The big, missed Eastern story

Nobody writes much about the strategies behind company and union struggles either, although they are the stuff of fascinating stories. The December agreement between Eastern Air Lines, Inc., and three of its major unions, for example, was hailed in many quarters as a model of union and management cooperation. That this cooperation came about only after more than two years of battle was less frequently reported.

Since the fall of 1981, Eastern president Frank Borman had used his ex-astronaut image and a steady peppering of bankruptcy threats, videotaped messages to the work place, and letters to workers' homes to convince employees that sacrifice on his terms was Eastern's only hope of staying in business. Meanwhile, District 100 of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers had hired analysts to look into Eastern finances and break down Borman's figures. Union leaders employed what they called "psychological jujitsu." Instead of rigidly resisting Borman's plans, they offered "positive alternatives" of their own, keeping a well-informed membership in on the action. (The press might have got a hint of this two years ago when workers, including mechanics still in their work clothes, lined up for microphones at the company's annual meeting in 1982 to question Borman.)

It was not always Borman that the union faced. Some of its negotiations were with Eastern's creditors, who were threatening to refuse to roll over the airline's loans unless the workers were willing to make concessions. The union's research, however, led it to question the role of the creditors, particularly Citibank and Chase Manhattan. These banks had put together loan packages to enable troubled Boeing Co., Inc., to build new jetliners and Eastern to buy them. The union contended that Eastern was using money from previous labor concessions to buy more jets than it needed or could afford, mainly for the benefit of the banks.

The bargaining at Eastern "was one of the greatest stories, with color and excitement, and the press didn't cover it until after the fact," says Andrew Banks, assistant director for the Center for Labor Research and Studies at Florida International University, and an adviser to District 100 of the Machinists union. "The union was asking, 'Why is Eastern buying all these airplanes?' It looked at *why* the company was in bad shape, not just that it was in bad shape, and determined that the way to fix this is to alter the way the company does business. This doesn't happen every day in the labor movement. It was beyond the parameters of a lot of reporters."

Earl Dotter/American Labor



'The real tragedy is that the media totally ignore working people. The message, day in and day out, is "your life doesn't matter; it just doesn't count."

Sam Pizzigati, National Education Association

Though reporters missed the significant pre-contract maneuvering at Eastern, most publications did recognize that the final agreement between the airline and its unions was extraordinary. *Time* magazine, however, seemed to miss the point. In a December 19 story called "Labor Gets a Working Over," *Time* called the agreement "another setback" for labor, emphasizing that workers were making broad concessions and getting some Eastern stock in return. Left out of *Time*'s account was the fact that workers gained a 25 percent share of the company, in common and preferred stock; and that, in return for the temporary pay concessions, the unions gained permanent access to Eastern's books, a say in formulation of business plans before they get to the board of directors, and the right to appeal plans the unions consider unwise. Workers can also now appoint four members of the company's twenty-one-member board.

Rather than make the Eastern agreement just another paragraph in its story, *Time* might have compared Eastern's agreement to other recent contracts, such as in steel, where workers got next to nothing in return for major concessions and unionists who opposed the give-backs had few strategies beyond defiance.

How to bring some life to a dead beat

Covering unions, of course, is near the center of anyone's definition of the labor beat. What happens to union workers — what they win or lose — often sets the tone for the rest of the work force. Simply covering strikes and major contracts, however, does not do the job. Trends and themes in organized labor, though more difficult and time-consuming to report, are often as interesting as they are important. Some samples:

□ A few unions have been successful in organizing new members, but most have had trouble, and either way they are up against more opposition these days. At a St. Louis insurance company, clerical workers arrived at the office to find 'Vote No' T-shirts on each of their desks and on the

backs of supervisors. Organizing drives can involve hard-fought psychological battles.

□ The enormous influx of women into the work force, and onto the rolls of unions, offers any number of stories. Are contracts adapting to this influx with provisions for maternity and paternity leaves, equal pay for equal work, and child care? Are women becoming union leaders? What of the computer and its effect on the vast number of women who are clerical workers? Have unions offered any protection from computer pacing of work, from computer-related health and safety problems?

□ There is much, too, to be written about corruption in unions, and about unions that fail to protect their members. And "Nobody's writing much about the disarray inside of unions, the bureaucratic deep sleep," observes Audrey Freedman of The Conference Board, a corporation-oriented think tank.

There is no real shortage of stories about the decline of union membership, power, and prestige. But rarely, if ever, do these stories go on to explore what that decline means for ordinary people in terms of their standard of living and their voice on the job. Another unasked question is: if union power is declining, what is taking its place?

Coverage of unions is too much restricted to contracts and strikes, and too restricted to a handful of major unions — Autoworkers, Teamsters, and a few others. At the same time, by being artificially restricted to unions, the labor beat excludes nonunion workplaces where four out of five Americans work. Work is a universal subject, and there are many ways to write about it.

The Wall Street Journal sent reporter Mary Williams to learn what it's like to be a bank teller last December, just as a few years earlier it had sent Beth Nissen to an assembly line at Texas Instruments to explore that company's labor policies. Last June, the *Journal's* George Getschow found laid-off northern industrial workers in a state of near slavery in work camps in the South.

William Serrin's November 1979 *New York Times* story on the first woman coal miner to die in a mine was a poignant description of a sad milestone for a changing work force. Mike McGraw says that when he covered labor in Des Moines and Kansas City, he used to get many of his union and nonunion labor stories by regularly checking the records of hearings for unemployment benefits. A worker's claim that he quit because a power-plant construction job was unsafe led McGraw to don a hardhat and take a look, which led to an exposé.

Economic issues like plant closings, productivity, foreign competition, and wage-and-benefit concessions (which are being imposed on nonunion as well as union workers) are of interest to all workers. Another such issue is workplace safety and health. Reporting on toxic chemicals, for example, has increased, but, comments Anthony Mazzocchi, former vice-president of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers Union, "the missing link is that these toxics emanate from someplace. People make that stuff." Some 17,000 people die of cancer each year as the result of on-the-job exposure to hazardous chemicals, according to one estimate, and they die with and without union cards.

Why labor is so bitter

A quiet picket line in the southern boot-heel of Missouri still colors my thoughts on labor journalism. I was a reporter for the first time, working for a weekly in a small town near the Mississippi River. Soybean prices were climbing, to the delight of the farmers. A local businessman claimed to be the only registered Republican in the county, and I was never sure if he was joking. Half the town gathered in a restaurant at noon to eat lunch and revel in the televised news of Watergate.

It was at lunch, I think, that I learned that the long-running strike at an electrical-parts plant outside town was coming to a head. Soon the workers would vote on whether to keep the union and continue the strike, or decertify and go back to work. They had been out for months.

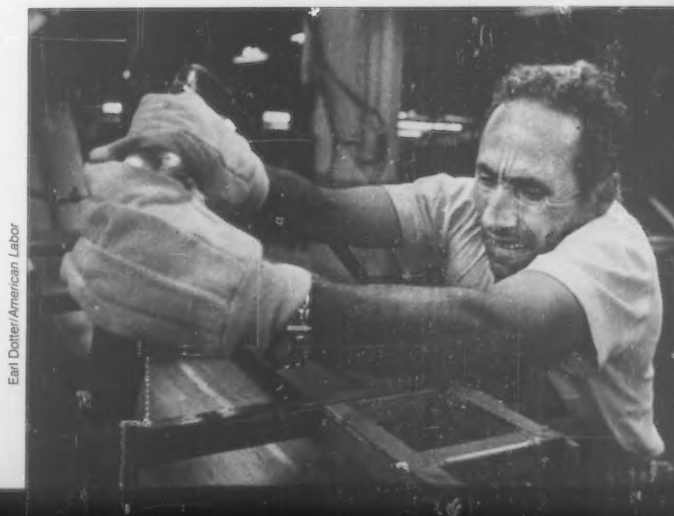
The plant owner's message, when I called, was that if the strike continued he would shut the plant permanently. This was a region of high unemployment, and the factory was one of the few new industries the town had been able to attract. The town fathers felt that gaining a reputation for having a militant work force would be disastrous.

All that remained for my story was the perspective from the picket line, but no one there would talk. The picketers stared at me like a tree full of owls. A woman picketer finally explained: nothing from the strikers' point of view, she said, had been printed in the newspaper since the strike had begun, some months before I'd been hired. More than once the publisher had insulted the strikers in her column.

Earlier that summer, when members of the publisher's favorite church youth choir were arrested at a marijuana picnic, she had tried to kill the story. But the editor, a fair-minded man, had stood up to her. With the sincerity of a believer, I assured the strikers that my story would get printed and that it would be balanced — and, finally, the picket line talked. But their skepticism was justified. The publisher ordered the story killed; the editor complied. Church choirs are one thing; labor is serious.

'The background and attitudes of journalists have changed radically. One of the effects of making more money is who they talk to. They don't have lunch with us anymore.'

Sheldon Samuels, AFL-CIO



Earl Dotter/American Labor

This was a small and probably isolated example, but I have wondered about how more significant stories are treated in more sophisticated places. I try to remember it when feeling complacent about the evenhandedness of journalism, or when listening to complaints about the press from the men and women of organized labor.

Their bitterness can be jarring. "It's almost to be assumed there will be hostility toward unions and they will be poorly covered," says Sam Pizzigati, associate director of the National Education Association's communications department. "The real tragedy is that the media totally ignore working people. The message, day in and day out, is 'your life doesn't matter; it just doesn't count.'"

"I take it as a given that a newspaper is a business, and a business is going to protect its own interests," says Anthony Mazzocchi, who is now director of the New York-based Workers' Policy Project, a workers' think tank on economic and community issues. "I don't buy the notion of a free press."

There are statistics to back up such complaints. Writing in the Fall 1979 issue of *The Public Interest*, a neoconservative quarterly, Harvard faculty members Richard L. Freeman and James L. Medoff found that "in the 1950s, 34 percent of the space devoted to unions in *Newsweek* and *Time* was unfavorable. That [statistic] has risen to 50 percent in the 1970s."

These days, organized labor seems more often dismissed or ignored than attacked, and without the help of any corporate cabal. Labor is out of fashion. "In recent years," observes A. H. Raskin, "interest has diminished. Editors, generally, think labor is not topical."

Perhaps one reason labor no longer interests journalists is that journalism today attracts a larger share of people who grew up viewing labor from the other side of the class fence than it did, say, a couple of decades ago. Sheldon Samuels, who worked as a reporter in Chicago in the 1950s and is now director of health, safety, and environment for the AFL-CIO's Industrial Union Department, recalls that in Chicago the bars used to be "jammed with newspaper people and labor people. That just doesn't happen now. The background and attitudes of journalists have changed radically. One of the effects of making more money is who they talk to. They don't have lunch with us anymore."

In a similar vein, Warren Brown, who covers the auto industry and formerly covered labor for *The Washington Post*, observes, "In the age of TV and big bucks and power journalism, there is a considerable distance between the people who write and report, and the people they write and report about."

Writing in the January/February 1982 issue of *Working Papers* (now called *Modern Times*), a pseudonymous observer of the labor scene summed up the situation: "The labor movement and working people are far beyond the ken of most editors. They do not pal with labor people; they do not invite labor people to their offices; their friends are in the business community. Moreover, and more importantly, they consider business the mainstream of America. So whole staffs are assembled to cover business. This reporting is

often not aggressive and innovative; it is, indeed, often unquestioning or biased reporting. But at least the press gives its attention to business. Although the union movement is as old as this country, it is still considered something outside the mainstream."

The balance is off

On January 3, 1980, the front page of *The New York Times* had a story about Postmaster General William Bolger's promise to speed up delivery of mail in New York. Uniformed guards kept union officials from entering the meeting where he spoke to business and political figures.

Two days later, on an inside page, the *Times* reported that twelve "serious" safety violations had been found in the area of the New York Bulk and Foreign Mail Center where, three weeks earlier, a twenty-five-year-old mail handler, Michael McDermott, had been dragged into a conveyor belt and killed.

Officials at the hearing testified that there had been 1,765 accidents at the bulk center in 1979, and 2,547 the year before. A manager testified that he had been demoted for shutting down a conveyor belt he considered unsafe. McDermott's widow testified that her husband often complained to his supervisors about safety hazards, but was told to "go back to work or be fired." A union official told the *Times* that some safety devices at the facility had been disconnected to allow it to run smoothly at peak capacity.

Bolger wanted faster delivery, the union wanted safer work. It seems obvious to say so, but, despite some recent rhetoric to the contrary, management and labor do not have the same interests and priorities. To a worker and his community, a salary is a benefit; to an owner and his manager, that salary is a cost. "There's not enough labor history," says Lance Compa, Washington attorney for the United Electrical Workers. "There's not enough sensitivity to the reasons people formed unions in the first place. There is an uncanny similarity to the late 1920s, when respected journalists were saying that we don't need unions anymore."

Business journalism is a growth industry these days, and the public's economic sophistication has gained. But too much of this expanded coverage of the struggle for profit leaves out labor's perspective. The balance is off. To correct it will take more reporting on work, more economics with the human touch.

As a start, journalists might swear off repeating the shortened misquote of Samuel Gompers, the first president of the American Federation of Labor. "What does labor want? More" — this is how Gompers has been quoted through the years. What he actually said, in part, at a meeting in Chicago ninety-one years ago was this: "... what does labor want? ... We want more schoolhouses and less jails; more books and less arsenals; more learning and less vice; more constant work and less crime; more leisure and less greed; more justice and less revenge; in fact, more of the opportunities to cultivate our better natures. ..."

What Gompers said, as usual in labor, was more complicated and more interesting than what gets into the nation's press.

El Salvador I

Second time around: how to cover an election

by JACK SPENCE

Dan Rather called it "a triumph." Frank Reynolds found it a "gratifying, even inspiring . . . exercise in democracy." In their coverage of the Salvadoran election of a constituent assembly, held on March 28, 1982, the U.S. media portrayed massive numbers of voters braving guerrilla attacks on polling places to vote in a democratic and honest election. The turnout was seen as a decisive repudiation of the guerrillas. THOUSANDS VOTE DESPITE

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REBEL THREATS ran a *Washington Post* subhead. SALVADORANS DEFY BULLETS TO VOTE, declared *The Boston Globe*. The failed guerrilla tactic, said ABC's Hilary Brown, "was to so terrify the people that they would stay away from the polls."

Extensive coverage hammered home these themes. The *Post*, the *Globe*, and *The New York Times* — the three dailies selected for review in this article — ran a total of thirty-two front-page El Salvador stories in the week surrounding the election. On election day and the day after, a review of video tapes of the nightly network news programs reveals, stories averaged eight minutes — a long

time by network standards. (By contrast, the networks devoted about one-half as much time to Mitterrand's election in 1981, and provided no coverage of the watershed 1972 Salvadoran presidential election, a failed test in democracy which set the stage for the civil war.)

The dominant motifs of this saturation coverage now seem quite dubious. "Bang-bang" stories and the prominent play given to statements made by elated Salvadoran and U.S. officials obscured important dimensions of an election held in the midst of a civil war. The following questions are intended to stimulate thinking that might prevent the press from coming up with a replay of its past

The big turnout: a paucity of polling places helped produce photos that "proved" the size of the turnout. Few reporters checked out the figures.



Michel Philippot/Sygma

performance when covering the election scheduled to be held in El Salvador this March.

How extensive is the violence?

In 1982, headlines, story leads, and extensive footage of fighting in Usulután and in a San Salvador slum district gave the impression that on March 28 El Salvador's polling places were under widespread attack. However, the three dozen print and TV accounts of election-day firefights all came from the same eight places, and extrapolated from them. The theme taken up by the major dailies and by *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News & World Report* — namely, that voters were bravely defying guerrilla attacks on polling places — was based on evidence reflecting events that occurred at fewer than 3 percent of the nation's polling places. Moreover, while there were reports that two voters had been slightly injured, there were no reports that any voters had been killed.

What is the intent of election day violence?

Even the reports of the eight confirmed firefights provided questionable support for the intimidate-the-voters and disrupt-the-election news themes. Reporters routinely linked the sound of shooting to the election, even though gunfire is an everyday sound in El Salvador. It is true that in the city of Usulután guerrilla attacks prevented voting and that in Apopa, a town about eight miles north of San Salvador, the fighting broke out just as the polls were opening, but this does not add up to an all-out effort to keep voters away from the polls.

Before the election, statements made by the left opposition suggested divisions in the Democratic Revolutionary Front/Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FDR/FMLN) coalition. One leftist leader predicted that a general insurrection would take place that would make it impossible to hold the election. But there was also talk of staging military actions in urban areas to "show-window" strength for the international media present for the election. Another line given out was that the election, being a farce, did not deserve special attention; the FDR/FMLN would continue to conduct military actions, "before, during, and after the election."



The violence factor: Was election day fighting necessarily linked — as most reporters wrote — to an all-out guerrilla campaign to disrupt the voting? Isolated attacks occurred in Apopa (above and right) and Usulután.

In the light of these conflicting statements, then, the occupation of Usulután could be viewed as an attempt to disrupt the election, or, alternatively, as a "show-window" battle, or as an action of the kind that would be carried out "before, during, and after the election." U.S. reporters, however, tended to stuff all guerrilla activity into a news frame imputing an intent to disrupt the election. Thus, an attack on a military convoy (*Globe*, March 28), even the destruction of a soft-drink truck (ABC, March 25), were tied into the dominant disrupt-the-election theme. Two days before the election, Jack Smith of ABC featured a close-up of a captured box of explosives intended, he said, to disrupt the election. Viewers might have wondered how he divined this.

What pressures do voters face?

Reporters addressed this question, but in a lopsided fashion. In the days preceding the election, much was made of the plan to paint voters' fingers with ink visible only to infrared lamps in order to protect voters against guerrilla reprisals and, at the same time, to prevent multiple voting. Much less attention was given to the topic of citizens' fears of what might happen to them if they failed to show up at the polls. In a March 26 report from a marketplace, Tom Brokaw interviewed a citizen who said he was afraid to vote — and afraid, too, to have his ID card indicate that he had *not* voted.

Prior to the election there had been at least fleeting references to the double

bind in which voters found themselves. From March 28 on, however, voting was presented as entirely voluntary. Observers invited by the State Department were widely quoted as saying that they had observed fair procedures and that the election was a great success. The theme of guerrilla threats continued. A lone reference to fear of the army maltreating those who did not vote appeared at the end of a March 30 *New York Times* piece by Raymond Bonner.

Completely unreported was the guerrillas' clandestine Radio Venceremos broadcast two days before the election, advising citizens that it did not matter if they voted or not in the electoral "farce." Stephen Kinzer of *The Boston Globe*, in a thoughtful March 30 wrap-up, noted the massive government pro-vote media blitz, supplemented by Defense Minister General José Guillermo García's announcement a week before the election that failure to vote would be "an act of treason." (The practice of numbering ballots, which made it possible to discover who voted, apparently went unreported until last August, when William O. Taylor, publisher of *The Boston Globe*, wrote an op-ed piece on the subject.) The combination of the guerrilla radio broadcast and the military pressures to vote ran against the election-day story line. But when a spokesperson for the left, in a two-sentence interview on NBC's post-election special, suggested that citizens had felt pressured to vote, Brokaw, forgetting his pre-election interview with the worried voter, char-



acterized the spokesperson's statement as a "predictable and tough propaganda line."

What is the democratic context of the election?

Two years ago the media displayed little interest in the opposition assertion that the election was a "farce." A few pre-election reports mentioned in passing that the left feared that its candidates would not be safe — a fear the Reagan administration subsequently recognized might be legitimate. But on election day and in post-election reporting this was forgotten, despite the assassination by government-linked death squads of six civilian leftist leaders in November 1980 and the publication of a "traitors list" of 130 opposition leaders in March 1981. On the issue of freedom of the press, only Kinzer's wrap-up mentioned that opposition newspapers and radio stations had long since been firebombed into silence.

Contemporary reports, both print and broadcast, portrayed the election officials as unbiased. It has since emerged that the Central Elections Commission distributed, with U.S. funds, hundreds of thousands of copies of an election comic book in which the guerrillas were depicted as snarling bad guys.

In short, while the left was nominally free to participate in the election, it could do so only under impossible conditions, as exemplified by the fact that voting would be supervised by anti-left officials in polling places guarded by the military

that had originally driven the opposition into exile and guerrilla warfare.

How big is a "big turnout"?

While the media portrayed long lines of voters, thus emphasizing the size of the turnout, they failed to mention that San Salvador, with a voting-age population of close to 400,000, had only thirteen polling places. They also failed to challenge the numbers issued by officials, all of whom shared a common interest in a big turnout. They did not challenge Ambassador Hinton's statement on March 26 that a turnout of more than 600,000 would be "terrific," although 600,000 represented only 46 percent of the supposed total of 1.3 million eligible voters. And they did not challenge that supposed total, although an authoritative 1979 World Bank projection put the nation's voting-age population at 2.2 million. Three days after the election, government officials claimed that 1.5 million people had voted — a number 15 percent larger than the previously cited total of eligible voters — but by then the U.S. election observers had gone home and journalists had lost interest. (When a study by Salvadoran professors claimed, in June, that the vote totals had been greatly inflated, their finding received only minor newspaper attention.)

How should the vote be interpreted?

The media attentively followed the division of voters among the five parties. The victory of the four right-wing parties

over the Christian Democrats — the party favored by the Reagan administration — was seen as a problem, since the rightists opposed the agrarian reform sponsored by the administration. Viewing the results primarily in terms of U.S. foreign policy, most reporters did not attempt to figure out why peasants had apparently voted for parties that were opposed to giving them land. Joanne Omang of *The Washington Post* was an exception; an April 1 piece filed from San Salvador provided a detailed attempt to answer this question.

On the air and in print the election was cast as an overwhelming defeat for the left. ABC's post-election broadcast, to cite only one example, contained a dozen assertions of a defeat for the rebels by reporters, administration officials, and Salvadoran politicians. What was missing in this ballots-over-bullets news frame was any analysis suggesting that a civil war skews the election process in the direction of those who control the polling places.

Media reports of another civil war illustrate the potential for such distortion. Coverage of the 1979 election in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) almost exactly paralleled that accorded El Salvador's election three years later. Bishop Muzorewa, a "moderate" anti-guerrilla black, gained 67 percent of the vote in the first election in which blacks could run for parliament. The election was controlled by the white government and excluded guerrillas. Stories hailed the exercise in democracy (*The New York Times* headlined a 65 percent turnout), and portrayed voters turning out despite guerrilla threats. Within a year guerrilla victories made it necessary to hold a second, internationally supervised election. In a complete reversal, Muzorewa's party won a mere 8 percent of the vote and only three of the eighty black seats in the 100-member parliament; guerrilla leaders won seventy-seven seats. The fact that 50 percent more votes were cast in the second election was not the stuff of headlines.

Once again this March the press will presumably expend a great deal of time and reportorial energy on the coverage of a Salvadoran election. This time, with the advantage of hindsight, it should be possible for journalists to escape the narrow news frames of 1982. ■

El Salvador II

Radio Venceremos: static over a guerrilla source

by LINDA DRUCKER

Four times a day, above the din of crackling interference, the voice of El Salvador's clandestine Radio Venceremos bursts onto the airwaves. "Radio Venceremos is on the air, expression of people's power. Sending its signal of freedom from territories controlled by our people in arms," the announcer says at the beginning of each broadcast.

Venceremos is operated by guerrillas of the Farabundo Martí Liberation Front (FMLN). Its announcers use assumed names, its location is a mystery, and its Salvadoran listeners risk losing their lives by simply tuning in. The typical twenty-five-minute broadcast is a series of combat reports, often accompanied by martial music or staccato bursts of pre-recorded gunfire, that describe in great detail even the smallest advance of the FMLN's 7,000-person guerrilla army. Weapons captured from the U.S.-backed Salvadoran army are enumerated one by one. Sometimes the rebel station will put guerrillas on the air live from the battlefield. "This is the mobil unit of Radio Venceremos reporting from the site of the fighting north of Sociedad, Morazán," one such broadcast began. "Fifty prisoners of war have been taken from the Gerardo Barrios Battalion, and, in addition, we have also inflicted twenty-two casualties. In a moment, the Radio Venceremos unit will try to interview the captured prisoners." "One thing you can say about Venceremos is that it's comprehensive," says veteran UPI correspondent John Newhagen, who was based in El Salvador for two years. "If three armed guerrillas stop some cars on the Pan-American highway, you'll hear about it the next day on Venceremos."

Linda Drucker reports from El Salvador for Time magazine. Jonathan W. Poses of KOPN-FM, in Columbia, Missouri, assisted with the research for this article.

In a country whose local press has been effectively silenced at gunpoint and where the military is often reluctant to give information, foreign correspondents have come to consider Venceremos an indispensable source, albeit one that must be treated as distinctly partisan. Since it first went on the air, in January 1981, Venceremos has been mentioned or quoted in more than 300 Reuters, 500 Associated Press, and 650 United Press International dispatches. It has been cited more than fifty times in *The Washington Post* and more than eighty in *The New York Times*.

Venceremos first became a major source for foreign correspondents during a two-year state of siege in which all reporting on the Salvadoran military situation was banned from the local press. For wire-service reporters, the day would begin at 6:30 A.M. with Venceremos's early broadcast and would not end until the last broadcast, some thirteen and a half hours later. While listening to Venceremos has never been technically illegal, "it's not the kind of thing you'd tune in to in a laundry room," says one reporter, who recalls how she tried to prevent her neighbors in a crowded San Salvador apartment complex from overhearing the rebel radio's distinctive sound. "I used to listen to it in bed in the morning with a sheet over my head, trying to muffle the sound with a couple of pillows." Today, the use of Radio Venceremos as a reporting tool has become so institutionalized that the major news organizations have transcripts of the morning broadcast delivered to their Camino Real offices, along with similar transcripts of the right-wing radio Soberania (meaning Sovereignty) and a second leftist station, radio Farabundo Martí.

Foreign correspondents are not Venceremos's only audience. The FMLN

claims that Venceremos has a large audience of peasants and urban sium dwellers who form clandestine listening circles and pass tapes of the broadcasts among themselves. In El Salvador, the mere act of possessing a shortwave radio can bring the owner under suspicion of being a rebel sympathizer. For a short time Venceremos was heard not only on shortwave but also on FM, on which it could be heard by any Salvadoran with a cheap transistor. When the FM transmission stopped last year, for reasons unknown, political analysts say Venceremos probably lost at least half of its Salvadoran audience.

Washington Post reporter Christopher Dickey, who covered Central America for two and a half years, speculates that "people listen because they sympathize, or because they are curious, or in many cases just to find out something about what is going on in the inaccessible northern and eastern parts of the country dominated by the insurgents." The army high command receives transcripts. So does U.S. Ambassador Thomas Pickering, who says he closely monitors Venceremos "in order to get an idea what the guerrillas are thinking."

A choice of suspect voices

Foreign reporters generally try to be selective in their use of Venceremos broadcasts, whose reports they find more prompt and thorough than those put out by the army's public relations committee, known by its Spanish acronym, COPREFA. Some also regard Venceremos as more accurate than COPREFA. "In terms of credibility," contends one reporter, who requested anonymity, "Venceremos is light years ahead." Dickey of *The Washington Post* disagrees. "If Venceremos is more accurate than COPREFA," he says, "it is only marginally so. They both lie."

The extent to which the press uses Venceremos as a source has been the subject of considerable controversy in El Salvador, where both U.S. and Salvadoran officials have accused journalists of being "taken in" by the guerrilla station. "What the U.S. press tends to forget is that Venceremos is giving out as much disinformation as information," contends U.S. embassy spokesman Donald Hamilton. Says U.S. information officer Gregory Lagana, "Venceremos is very clever at what it does. It gives good information part of the time, building up its credibility. Because it's credible some of the time, the press can never entirely discount what it says."

Angered by press coverage of an inaccurate mid-November Venceremos report claiming that a military coup was imminent, COPREFA issued a harshly worded communiqué accusing some foreign correspondents of doing little more than "textually reproducing subversive propaganda." The quoting of any clandestine guerrilla station can lead to a reprimand or even expulsion. Last spring, for example, AP bureau chief Arthur Allen was forced to leave the country for more than six months for having quoted a guerrilla station's accusation that Salvadoran police had tortured a suspect in the slaying of a U.S. military adviser — a charge that U.S. embassy officials later confirmed.

Meanwhile, the success of Venceremos has forced the government to try to improve its own information services. Says Lieutenant Colonel Ricardo Cienfuegos, the young, English-speaking officer who recently assumed control of COPREFA, "Our approach to the problem is to provide better information. What we ask is that before reporters write stories based on 'clandestine' sources, they get our comment. All we want to do is to be allowed to compete in this war of information." One of the first innovations made by the military was the opening of a twenty-four-hour phone line to respond to journalists' inquiries. For its part, the civilian sector of the government has hired two former American journalists to run a new press center. Nevertheless, while the government has recently won some ground, the guerrillas still appear to be winning the information war.

Susan Meiselas/Magnum



The guerrillas tune in: So do correspondents and embassy officials, who receive transcripts of the broadcasts.

The moving target

Radio Venceremos is an outgrowth of People's Revolutionary Radio, launched in January 1980 by Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP), one of the five leftist groups, known collectively as the FMLN, fighting to overthrow the government. The ERP's goal was to rupture what spokesmen describe as the "information curtain" of the Salvadoran government: the fact that since the beginning of the civil war newspapers and radio stations have been barred, officially or unofficially, from reporting on the FMLN's view of the political situation, from quoting FMLN leaders, and from describing FMLN fighters as anything but "terrorists" or "subversives."

The guerrillas first responded to this lack of access to the national media by staging armed takeovers of local radio stations. Later, inspired by the example of Radio Sandino, the Sandinistas' clandestine wartime station, they decided to found their own station. The first broadcast of this People's Revolutionary Radio was made on January 20, 1980, from the midst of a 250,000-person demonstration in the heart of San Salvador. It was barely fifteen minutes long. The ERP made two more broadcasts from San Salvador before the staff, fearing detection, shut down the operation.

Within a year, the ERP felt it had sufficient military strength to reopen the station in the northeastern province of Morazán, an ERP stronghold. Accord-

ing to a history of Venceremos, published on its second anniversary, ERP commander Joaquin Villalobos and a column of armed guerrillas smuggled a World War II-era Viking Valiant transmitter, together with other broadcast equipment, into the province. The station's first task was to broadcast a call to arms during the January 1981 "final offensive," when the guerrillas expected a massive popular uprising. Founded at a time when the guerrillas expected the war to end rapidly in a revolutionary victory, the station was named Venceremos, meaning We will win.

The location of Radio Venceremos is a tightly kept secret. Two U.S. journalists, *New York Times* correspondent Raymond Bonner and free-lance photographer Susan Meiselas, say they saw the station during a two-week tour of guerrilla-controlled territory in Morazán province in January 1982. (Since then, no other Western journalists have been permitted to see Radio Venceremos.) The broadcast site, they say, was part of a large rebel base that included schools and field hospitals. According to Meiselas, the radio station was located in a special high-security area which even the guerrillas needed permission to visit. Bonner adds: "It [the station] was amazing — underground and very well camouflaged and concealed. At the very time we saw it, U.S. officials were asserting it was in Nicaragua." Embassy officials maintain that Venceremos broadcasts from a secret guerrilla safe-

house in a residential neighborhood in Managua, Nicaragua, and that, while the station may have some reporters in El Salvador, most of the production work is done in studios outside of the country. Some reporters tend to agree. Says William Montalbano of the *Los Angeles Times*, "I don't see how some guerrillas in a camp up in the mountains could know what AP, UPI, and Reuters are saying fast enough to comment on it the very same day."

Members of the Venceremos staff, interviewed last fall, insist that the station is located in El Salvador, that army shells have fallen as close as sixty meters from it, and that the station has survived repeated army attempts to destroy it by shifting location. "The radio is not exactly mobile," says a staff member who calls herself Ana Alicia Hernandez, "but we have two locations, one of which is underground and very well-protected. We call it 'the cave of Venceremos.' The other is a simple campesino house."

The closest the army ever came to destroying Venceremos, staff members say, was during a December 1981 offensive when some 6,000 government troops converged on the ERP's base camp at Guacamaya, Morazán. Caught in an ambush in which three staff members were killed, the guerrilla who was fleeing with the transmitter dropped it. Parts of it were recovered and several days later Defense Minister Jose Guillermo Garcia announced that the army had captured Radio Venceremos. Within a month, however, the station was back on the air.

Unable to destroy the station by military means, the Salvadoran army has resorted to other strategies. One is to boom distracting signals, including rock music, over the same frequencies.

Another strategy involved the establishment of a rival station that went on the air in October 1982. Its most notable broadcast reported that the oldest and most militant rebel leader, Salvador Cayetano Carpio, had been killed in action. Local newspapers carried stories of his death and foreign correspondents raced to verify it. But Carpio, in fact, was not dead. Instead, he was the victim of something he had denounced on the

air only a week before — a new radio station that foreign correspondents suspected was a CIA-funded disinformation operation. "Using the same frequencies, schedule, and style as the revolutionary station," Carpio said at the time, "it is spreading absolutely harebrained lies about the glorious revolutionary struggle." The radio called itself Radio Orientacion, but among the foreign press corps it quickly became known as Radio Mentiremos (We lie). It went off the air soon afterwards.

The credibility war

Venceremos is run by a group of from seven to ten full-time staff members, who use assumed names. All copy is read and edited by twenty-eight-year-old Mercedes del Carmen Letona, known as Commandante Luisa, who is one of the ERP's seven commanders. Staff member Hernandez says that only one of her colleagues was a journalist by profession before joining the revolutionary movement, and adds, "Much of the information Venceremos broadcasts comes from regular field soldiers whose journalistic experience is limited to transmitting information over a field radio about the course of the battle they are witnessing."

Francisco Guzman, president of the Managua-based Union of Salvadoran Journalists in Exile and a former journalism school professor, says that Venceremos made a "conscious decision" to adopt a journalistic style similar to that of the international news agencies "because we hoped the information would be used in capitalist media, even in right-wing media." Thus, Tass, *Pravda*, and even the Nicaraguan *Nuevo Diario*, for which Guzman now works as a part-time editor, were examples to be shunned rather than emulated. "We try not to violate certain principles of American journalism — objectivity, the inverted pyramid, identification of sources," Guzman says. "Instead of saying 'Constituent Assembly President Roberto D'Aubuisson, who is also chief of the death squads,' we'd prefer to say 'Constituent Assembly President Roberto D'Aubuisson, whom former U.S. Ambassador Robert White accused of being chief of the death squads.'" Staff member Hernandez adds, "We know that if we don't have credibility we'll never get

our point of view across."

While Radio Venceremos often does not live up to these lofty standards (as repeated mentions of the "fascist high command" and the "puppet dictatorship" attest), its deference to at least some of the conventions of Western journalism has worked well. Venceremos is quoted far more frequently than its right-wing imitator and competitor, Radio Soberania, which, unlike Venceremos, does not present its information as news. Instead, Soberania runs long-winded, emotional diatribes against land reform, negotiations with the left, and atheistic communism. (Venceremos, for its part, has recently spiced up its diatribes against "Yankee imperialism" with a soap-opera style satire, which is most reporters' favorite segment of the broadcast.)

Reporters admit that Soberania transcripts, unlike those of Venceremos, are often cast into the filing cabinet unread. According to one U.S. reporter, who asked not to be identified, "Soberania sounds like a bizarre right-wing philosophical discourse. If they gave us some news, maybe we'd start paying attention." Reporters, moreover, are reluctant to cite Soberania because they do not know exactly whom it represents. "Does it speak for the death squads, the ARENA party, or simply a few wealthy right-wing individuals?" asks Sam Dillon of *The Miami Herald*. Nevertheless, reporters say they find the station useful as a gauge of the mood of the nation's powerful right-wing forces. "When Soberania starts attacking labor union leaders, schoolteachers, or priests," says Robert Block of Reuters, "you get an idea of what kind of threats and killings to expect in the next few weeks."

Correspondents find Venceremos useful precisely because it represents a recognizable guerrilla organization that is difficult to contact within El Salvador. "If we use Venceremos a lot, it's not necessarily because we believe it's reliable, but because it fills a gap in our ability to contact guerrillas," says Dickey of *The Washington Post*. Some reporters, like Montalbano of the *Los Angeles Times*, believe it is often better to quote Venceremos than to quote a guerrilla the reporter may happen to meet on patrol. "Talking to a



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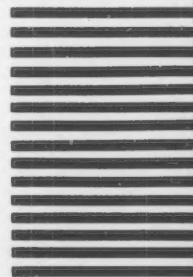
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Susan Meiselas/Magnum

A rare inside look: only two U.S. journalists have had a look at Radio Venceremos, located at the time of their visit in Morazán province.

clandestine guerrilla source," Montalbano says, "is like talking to an individual soldier, while listening to Venceremos is like talking to the FMLN's general staff." Some reporters, however, think that the press may err in automatically interpreting what Venceremos says as the "official" opinion of the FMLN. "We're talking about an organization that has five armies and fifteen layers of commanders," says Dillon. "How that is supposed to come out in one monolithic voice of the FMLN, I don't know."

Handle with care

Some Salvadoran correspondents compare their use of Venceremos to a Kremlinologist's use of *Pravda*. They don't trust what the station says, but use it to detect subtle shifts in guerrilla policy or differences among contending guerrilla factions. (Sometimes, for example, reporters can get an idea of which guerrilla group is responsible for an action by seeing which of the two guerrilla radio stations — Farabundo Martí, which is run by the Popular Liberation Forces, or Venceremos, which is run by the ERP — announces it first.) Reporters say that, over time, they have learned when to trust Venceremos. "Venceremos is very good on the number and type of weapons the guerrillas have captured, and the number of prisoners they have taken," says Michael Drudge of UPI. "But when

it comes to army casualties, their reports are wildly exaggerated, just as the army's reports of guerrilla casualties are wildly exaggerated."

Most reporters tend to follow certain rules of thumb: for example, when a reporter knows combat is going on somewhere and Venceremos does not mention it, it is likely that the guerrillas are taking a beating. Again, says Dillon, "When Venceremos says '*Retiremos sin mayor problema*' [We retreated without difficulties], that, too, probably means the guerrillas were defeated." Several reporters suggest that the more detailed a Venceremos report, the more likely it is to be truthful. Unfortunately, even this rule of thumb doesn't always work. When, for example, Venceremos predicted an imminent U.S.-backed invasion of El Salvador in mid-November, foreign correspondents were impressed by the wealth of detail in the Venceremos report, which said a specific number of Honduran troops was being massed in specific places in Honduras and Guatemala. All El Salvador-based wire-service correspondents filed the story, although some agencies, after checking with their Honduran and Guatemalan stringers, decided not to run it. The invasion, of course, never materialized.

Reporters disagree on the professional wisdom of writing so-called single-source stories based on Venceremos broadcasts. "It's terrible journalism to

base a story on the allegations of one extremely biased source," contends Loren Jenkins of *The Washington Post*. Perhaps the most irresponsible of such single-source stories was an Agence France Presse dispatch, filed from the agency's Costa Rican bureau, which quoted Venceremos's charges that U.S. military advisers stationed in El Salvador had burned pregnant women to death during an alleged 1981 massacre at Mozote, but which provided no comment from U.S. officials in El Salvador. Despite this egregious abuse, most wire-service reporters acknowledge that they have written such single-source stories, and defend the practice within certain limitations. Says Joseph Frazier of the AP, "You have to exercise some judgment as to how credible the allegation is, and then you immediately call the government or the army for comment. If you can't get a confirmation or a denial, you clearly state, 'This information could not be independently confirmed.'"

This no-independent-confirmation disclaimer does not satisfy embassy officials. "In wire-service lingo," says embassy spokesman Donald Hamilton, "Venceremos is identified by a few catchwords such as 'clandestine rebel Radio Venceremos.' Are these few catchwords enough to alert the farmer in Minnesota or the schoolteacher in Iowa that what follows is often unreliable information from a partisan, Marxist source?" Hamilton suggests that any dispatch quoting Venceremos should be accompanied by a disclaimer like "Venceremos is the radio station Salvadoran guerrillas use to make their views known."

In a November communique, CO-PREFA cited four examples in which Venceremos's reporting had been dead wrong. But despite the government's charges that foreign reporters irresponsibly reproduce guerrilla propaganda, an examination of wire-service copy sent from El Salvador shows that in only one instance — the invasion claim — did the press actually disseminate a false Venceremos report.

The hazards of relying on the voice of the guerrillas are obvious. Meanwhile, in a country where no source is not suspect and where guerrilla activities constitute the big story, Venceremos remains indispensable. ■

Over and out: the Overnight message

Will anyone pick up where NBC's late, lamented, late-night news show left off?

by MARY ELLEN
SCHOONMAKER

Fittingly, the end for the highly acclaimed, always irreverent *NBC News Overnight* last December was more like an Irish wake than a funeral. On the set, at NBC's studios in Manhattan, anchors Linda Ellerbee and Bill Schechner composed their last lead-ins wearing wreaths of wildflowers on their heads. A fan from Washington brought along "Save *NBC News Overnight*" buttons and bumper stickers he had had printed at his own expense, and ended up selling a lot of them to the staff and guests as souvenirs. Friends came and went all night, dozens of them jockeying for leaning space on an old piano to watch as airtime for the last show approached. Afterward, there was a party in the corridor outside studio 3K that lasted until dawn.

Among the mourners was Barry Bernson, a feature reporter at NBC's Chicago station, WMAQ. He told how he'd been disappointed the first time a story of his made the network evening news. His big chance, and the anchor had introduced him to the nation as "Bert Bernch."

The *Overnight* staff treated him better. They used about seventy of his pieces. In fact, his offbeat style and quirky animal stories, like the one about where pink plastic flamingos go in the winter, became *Overnight* trademarks. But it wasn't just the end of his own fling with late-night fame that Bernson was mourning. It was the passing of a different kind of news show. "It's a real fight to put a personal stamp on TV news," he said. "What you often end up with is gray jello."

Overnight's short, happy life (July 5, 1982-December 2, 1983) is proof that a network news show does not have to be

gray jello, that it can be intelligent, imaginative, unpredictable, and moving. In fact, the show was so different from any other news show on the air that it attained a kind of cult status. After its cancellation was announced vigils were held outside NBC offices in New York, Washington, and Chicago, and close to 10,000 letters, telegrams, and phone calls poured in from outraged fans. A monk wrote that he watched the show "religiously." A night nurse wrote that the show's anchors "seemed so genuine that they became. . . the first news people I ever trusted." And in a posthumous tribute in February, *Overnight* was awarded an Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University award for excellence in broadcast journalism.

NBC cancelled *Overnight* because of low ratings and financial losses, reportedly upwards of \$6 million. The show's estimated one to two million viewers were simply not enough, explained Reuven Frank, president of NBC News. In a note to the staff, he wrote that, while *Overnight* was the network's finest hour of news, "merely being best is not enough when the cost is so much greater than the income." NBC chairman Grant Tinker wired the staff, ". . . if the fate of *Overnight* depended only on its quality, it would run forever."

Maybe it should have. Where else could you see how Sandinista TV covered the U.S. expulsion of Nicaraguan diplomats, or how Soviet TV covered the breakdown of nuclear arms negotiations? Even if it lost money, the show could have been kept on as a workshop, a farm team of sorts. After all, TV news used to be considered more public service than profit center. True, *Overnight* had more freedom because it was a supplement to the evening news, and its late hour (the show came on at 1:30 A.M.) allowed for more antics and opinion than

other network news shows. But *Overnight* took risks, it experimented, it used its hour length to let stories breathe.

If *Overnight* made any assumptions, they were that its audience was intelligent and could grasp the complexity of the news. Whereas anchor Tom Brokaw recently told *The New York Times* that *NBC Nightly News* was striving "to make stories more explanatory, with no presumption of knowledge," Ellerbee and Schechner explained little. Instead, they used quotes, personal anecdotes, aphorisms, even passages from the Bible to get viewers to think about what they were seeing. "What we did was the complete opposite of saying 'that's the way it is,' " says Ellerbee, who delivered the news in a casual, conversational style. "Nothing lies more easily than the camera," Ellerbee goes on to say. "Pointing it one way means you are turning it away from something else." Ellerbee says that she tried not to explain

Ellerbee and Schechner sign off



Mary Ellen Schoonmaker is a free-lance writer and a part-time editor at *The Record* in Bergen County, New Jersey.

or oversimplify, but to frame each story and give it a context. "We have a responsibility to do more than just take the first paragraph of the reporter's story and repeat it," she says.

One of *Overnight's* most successful techniques was to use the positioning of stories to point up connections and encourage viewers to think. On the last show, for example, the lead segment about the drop in the nationwide unemployment rate under the Reagan administration's free-market economic policies was followed by a piece about a drop in unemployment brought on by direct government intervention: a small town in Florida had bought a trolley diner in order to provide jobs for its citizens, who were shown happily working the grill and waiting on tables. A few weeks earlier, a story about the forced removal of South African blacks from a "black spot" in what had recently been designated an all-white area was followed by a piece about a noisy horde of Florida shoppers zeroing in on a shelf of Cabbage Patch dolls, only to stop dead in their tracks when they realized that most of the dolls were black. A woman held one of the few white dolls up to the camera. "I got the prettiest one," she said.

Another strength was *Overnight's* unusual visual quality — you couldn't just listen to it, you had to watch. The staff made regular use of feature pieces set to

music, sometimes with unsettling effect. In one piece, two similar sequences showing marines in Grenada were edited differently and set to two different kinds of music — one patriotic, the other antiwar — to give viewers an idea of TV editing and editorializing.

One of the ironies of *Overnight's* editorial success was that it did things so well so cheaply. Because it had such a small budget — about \$4 million to \$7 million a year — "we had to make a virtue out of poverty," says Cheryl Gould, thirty-one, the show's senior producer. "Basically, that meant we were scavengers, using other shows' rejects, the stuff on the cutting-room floor."

One money-saving technique was to use news and features from local affiliates and foreign footage from all over — Britain, France, Spain, Poland, China, Japan, South Korea — and, in some cases, two or three different countries' reporting of the same event. The use of international coverage, complete with foreign languages and subtitles, not only showed viewers things they otherwise would not have seen or heard, but, at the same time, gave them a taste of how other countries view the U.S. When George Shultz was nominated for Secretary of State, for example, *Overnight* showed how the press in NATO countries covered his confirmation hearings. "Foreign reporters rarely take the same

quotes from speeches that American reporters do," says Herb Dudnick, the show's original executive producer, who is now with NBC's specials and political unit. "The extra dimension showed what foreign reporters considered to be important."

Could *Overnight* have been saved? Tom Shales, TV critic for *The Washington Post*, says it would not have been the first time that a money-losing show had been kept on the air simply because it had class. "William Paley kept *The Paper Chase* on at CBS because he personally liked it," Shales says, "and Grant Tinker did the same with *Hill Street Blues* and *St. Elsewhere*. But the networks are bottom-line crazy."

The *Overnight* staff believes that the show was given too little promotion by NBC and that its audience was never properly identified. The show's low Nielsen ratings, they say, did not take into account dormitories, hospitals, nursing homes, or bars, all of which harbored loyal *Overnight* viewers.

Is there a legacy for *Overnight* — if not at the dinner hour, then perhaps in prime time? Shortly after the show was cancelled, word had it that NBC was considering the possibility of a one-hour prime-time weekly news show based on the *Overnight* format, just as CBS was readying *The American Parade*, a one-hour prime-time weekly news show scheduled to air this spring.

Overnight may have left a mark on some local broadcasters as well. Ellerbee received a letter from a man who had been interviewed for a news job with a Boston station. He was hesitant to take the job until the news director told him how he wanted stories produced: "*Overnightish*."

On the last night of the show Schechner told viewers that *Overnight* had broken a media barrier. "We showed there is more than one way to send and receive the news. The experiment succeeded. Will the techniques spread? Let us hope."

Ellerbee was a little less optimistic. "We leave smiling," she said, then added an appropriate comment from Mark Twain, the one about the missionary and the cannibals: "They listened with great interest to everything he had to say, and then they ate him." ■

We showed there is more than one way to send and receive the news.



BOOKS

For shame, gentlemen

The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain

Vol. I, The Nineteenth Century;
Vol. II, The Twentieth Century
by Stephen Koss
The University of North Carolina Press.
Vol. 1 (1981), 455 pp., \$29.00; Vol. II
(1984), 704 pp., \$34.00

by PIRS BRENDON

Nothing is more remarkable than the contempt so often expressed for the British press — except the fact that it has almost invariably been justified. It rings down the ages. Dr. Johnson defined a journalist as “a man without virtue who writes lies at home for his own profit,” and Leslie Stephen echoed him, describing journalism as “writing for pay upon matters of which you are ignorant.” Lord Salisbury, when prime minister, dismissed the *Daily Mail* as being composed by office boys for office boys, and Asquith, plagiarizing his predecessor, said that Liberal newspapers were “written by boobies for boobies.” The Tory Lord Hugh Cecil hoped that “there is a purgatory, for otherwise journalists will all go to hell,” and the Socialist Aneurin Bevan said that Britain possessed “the most prostituted Press in the world.” The humorist Humbert Wolfe memorably concluded:

You cannot hope to bribe or twist
Thank God! the British journalist,
But, seeing what the man will do
Unbribed, there's no occasion to.

Now, in this monumental and magnificent survey, Stephen Koss, a professor at Columbia University, traces the shameful history of British journalism over the last 150 years, concentrating especially on the period between

Piers Brendon, author of The Life and Death of the Press Barons, lives in Cambridge, England.

1850 and 1950. His main theme is the prolonged failure of British newspapers to take advantage of their emancipation from direct government controls (exercised by means of prosecutions and discriminatory duties on newsprint and advertisements) and assert their rightful independence. During the 1850s the press was relieved of the “taxes on knowledge” (despite Lord Salisbury’s objection on the ground that newspapers did not contain any knowledge), and began to make much of its position as the fourth estate of the realm. But, as Koss shows, this was largely window dressing. What really happened was that newspapers exchanged official control for informal, and often clandestine, political affiliation. They established links with, and often became clients of, the political parties that were beginning to crystallize by the middle of the century. Newspapers were systematically used “to formulate party programmes, to implement political strategies, and to serve personal ambitions.” As the Liberal

Richard Cobden said in 1857, “There is far more corruption going on in connection with the public Press than in any other walk of political life.”

Admittedly, not all Victorian journalists were mere Fleet Street-walkers, at the beck and call of their political patrons. For example, the famous editor of *The Times*, John Thadeus Delane (whose middle name Koss misspells, one of his rare slips), could never be relied on to toe the government’s line. Ministers often tried to barter information for influence with him. In 1866 Lord John Russell even complained that Lord Derby, the Tory prime minister, “has done that which I would not do, namely, submitted his appointments to Mr. Delane before submitting them to the Queen.” But Delane remained pretty much his own man: Gladstone asserted that his paper should be forbidden to change sides more than a certain number of times a year. Similarly, W. T. Stead, self-styled “dictator” of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, was impossible either to squash or to square, and he berated less virile editors for their impotence.

Whether as concubines or eunuchs, however, most of Stead’s journalistic contemporaries occupied a place in the political harem. During the Edwardian era their servitude became more discreet. Subsidies to newspapers were



The French Emperor, with Le Moniteur in his back pocket, dispenses bribes to the Morning Post. The Standard and the Morning Herald wait their turns.

— Punch, 15 February 1856



A TORY PARTY! (SAVE THE MARK.)

Mrs. Harris (a struggling News-vendor). "STANERD! STANERD! ONLY A PENNY! PLEASE SUPPORT AN OLD 'OMAN, DEAR GENTS!"
 D-rby (to Disraeli). "FOR GOODNESS SAKE GIVE HER A PENNY, AND TELL THE OLD GOOSE WE DON'T WANT HER CACKLES—PEOPLE WILL THINK SHE BELONGS TO US—JUST OPPOSITE THE CLUB TOO!"

Lord Derby and Disraeli try to avoid the impression that the Standard ('Mrs Harris') is in their pay. — Punch, 3 May 1862

often disguised in the form of investment in their shares by party nominees. Even Alfred Harmsworth, "the Napoleon of Fleet Street," was much more of a party man early in his career than he was afterwards willing to admit. And, like other press magnates, he owed his title (Lord Northcliffe) to the support his newspapers gave to the Conservatives. Nevertheless, Northcliffe was a volatile creature, so prone to hop from one political position to another that Lloyd George compared him to a flea. In 1912 J. L. Garvin (editor of *The Observer*) lamented to the Tory leader that Northcliffe had made "a reliable party press" impossible. "The difficulty is not on this or that question," Garvin said. "He lets us down in every question in every crisis; and likes letting us down to show his power."

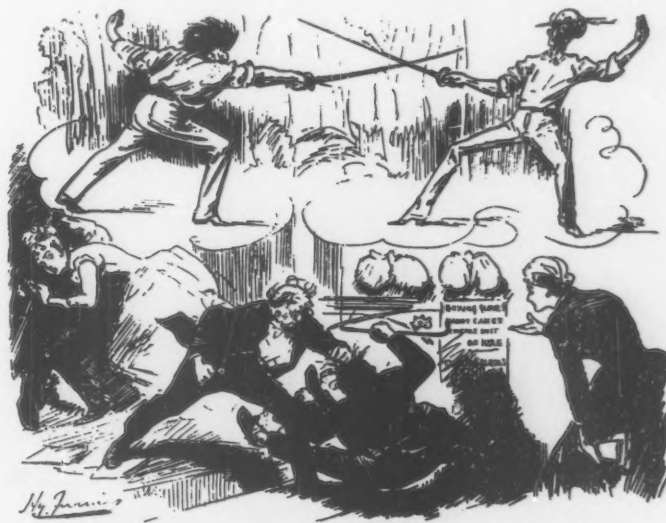
Northcliffe was a sign of things to come. But the growth of journalistic independence was slow, confused, and concealed. Hardly anyone in Fleet Street openly admitted to being an auxiliary of Downing Street. In private, however, an editor like St. Loe Strachey (of *The Spectator*) might tell Baldwin that his journal "would help" the Tories precisely because it occupied a "kind of independent-non-partisan" position.

Still, between the wars the boundaries of the fourth estate were extended, particularly by Lord Rothermere and, even more, by Lord Beaverbrook. The former, according to one Conservative, was a "perfect specimen of the plutocratic cad." The latter, according to another, was "a man utterly and completely untrustworthy, a crook of crooks, without

principle or conscience." Both were wayward and uncontrollable. As Koss shows, Baldwin's celebrated denunciation of these press lords (he said that they aimed at "power without responsibility — the prerogative of the harlot throughout the ages") was really an expression of outrage that he was not being permitted to live off their immoral earnings.

The National Government of the 1930s and Churchill's wartime coalition led, as Beaverbrook noted, to "a marked falling-off in Party allegiance." This was reflected in the press, and after the war, when fewer papers were chasing larger circulations, they severed commitments to politicians and abandoned their function as party agencies. Today the men and women of Westminster constantly seek Rupert Murdoch's support but it is never subject to their command — as his recent disenchantment with Mrs. Thatcher shows. In freeing itself from "ironclad partisan" attachments, Koss concludes, the British press has become "Americanized."

This, in grossly simplified and abbreviated form, is the argument of *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain*. It must be said at once that these two volumes are the most authoritative work ever to have been written about the British press. For that matter, nothing of their academic weight or intellectual dis-



JOURNALISM IN FRANCE. JOURNALISM IN ENGLAND.
 (A CONTRAST.)

— Punch, 4 October 1890

tion has been written about the American press. Indeed, Professor Koss is a phenomenon to excite the wonder, envy, and admiration of scholars everywhere. His book is based on research in no fewer than 124 manuscript archives. He seems to have perused almost every British national newspaper and journal of the period he covers, not to mention countless books, ancient and modern. His *work* might have kept a team of students *busy* for years. Yet he did it all on his *own*, in the midst of a heavy schedule of teaching and other writing.

Moreover, his style is a model of elegance, precision, and (often) wit. And his judgments are not only wise and original, but benevolent as well. He is concerned with ascertaining the truth, not with scoring points against reprobate newspapermen past or present, let alone against writers (myself, I regret to say,

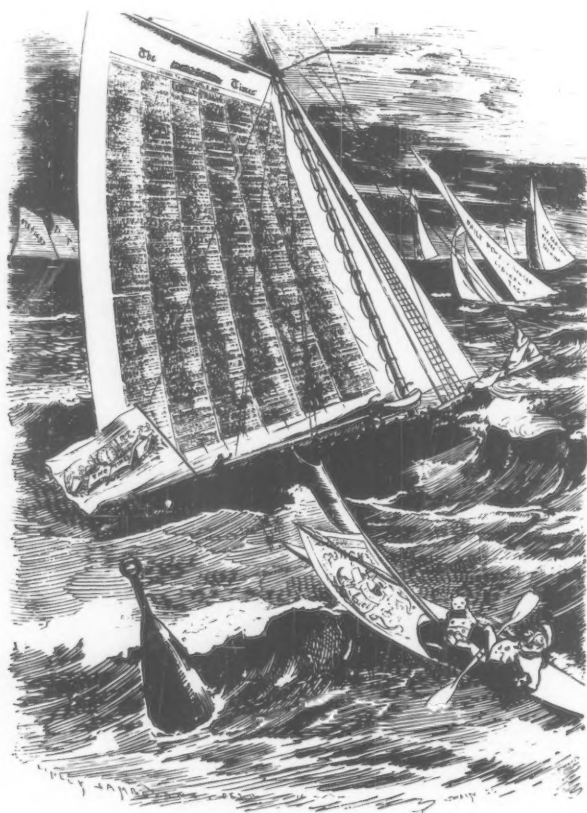
included) whose failings he incidentally exposes. To be sure, he tells a scandalous story about Beaverbrook's using a sexual liaison to exert pressure on Garvin, but only for purposes of illustration. Elsewhere, with droll austerity, he describes Frances Stevenson (who was Lloyd George's mistress) as his "exceptionally devoted secretary."

American readers should be warned, however, that Koss assumes a minute knowledge of British political history. They may also find that he tells them rather more than they wish to know about the interminable changes in newspaper ownership and affiliation, without always explaining how these bear on his general thesis. Koss is a scholar writing for other scholars. He makes few concessions to general readers on either side of the Atlantic, who may be unable to see the forest for the trees or to com-



SHIVER SISTER

David Low's cartoon of the 'Shiver Sister' Geoffrey Dawson, and Lord Lothian under the direction of Herr Goebbe



TACKLING—"READY ABOUT!"

The General Election of 1880: the Daily News (upper right) takes an 'advanced Radical tack'; The Times in the foreground tips ominously; and the Standard and the Daily Telegraph (upper left) steer a smooth Tory course. — Punch, 17 April 1880

prehend why British newspapers so long failed to grasp the independence extolled in libertarian rhetoric. What is more, Koss is unwilling to turn his detailed analysis into a comprehensive indictment of the venality of the British press. Yet the material for such an indictment is present in everything he says.

Ultimately, it is the British class system that is to blame for the consistent failure of newspapermen to come into their kingdom of the fourth estate. Until quite recently Grub Street hacks were reckoned by genteel people to possess the morals of actors and the proclivities of poachers. Certainly they were "in trade." They therefore lacked the prestige, or were too deferential, to challenge the pervasive British convention that public information is the private property of the government. On the other hand, most press tycoons who managed to climb the social ladder did not want to beat the system but to join it. Lord Kemsley, for example, publisher of *The Sunday Times*, thought that there was something vulgar, if not downright improper, in the disclosure of top people's secrets. Stephen Leacock was not far wrong in claiming that the crucial difference between American and British newspapers was that when the former got the news they shouted it from the housetops, whereas the latter tried to



ET, 1938.
 (Copyright in All Countries.)
 — left to right, J. L. Garvin, *Lady Astor*,
 performing their dance of appeasement
 — Evening Standard, 3 January 1938

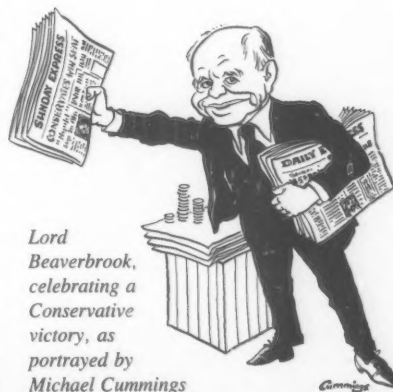
break it to the reader as gently as possible. Koss himself comments on the "moral paralysis" afflicting the British press during the 1930s. Those who controlled it, associating themselves with the upper class, refused to publish embarrassing truths about the monarchy or unpleasant ones about the imminence of war. "A paper can't afford to prophesy disaster, can it?" asked Beaverbrook with an impish grin.

No one, perhaps, illustrates the British establishment's attitude to the press better than Winston Churchill. Although he won his spurs as a war correspondent, and earned much of his living by writing for the newspapers, he had no conception of them as anything more than a personal convenience. "As to freedom of the press," he remarked dismissively, "why should any man be allowed to buy a printing press and disseminate pernicious opinions calculated to embarrass the government?" Churchill was not above flattering and toadying to Northcliffe (while laughing at him behind his back) or licking Beaverbrook's boots. Yet at moments of crisis (1914, 1926, 1942) he was eager to license, censor, or suppress newspapers, regarding them exclusively as vehicles of propaganda. He approved of their voluntary conspiracy of silence over King Edward VIII's affair with Mrs. Simpson. And he used

the press lords — Camrose, Bracken, and Beaverbrook — in a successful endeavour to deceive the British public about his serious stroke in 1953. By contrast, after Eisenhower's heart attack in 1955, American newspapers went so far as to report on the nature and rate of the president's bowel movements.

Old habits of subordination die hard. Stephen Koss is perhaps too sanguine about the degree to which modern British newspapers have sloughed off their traditional dependence. There is still much backstairs influence at work. Journalists still hanker after baubles of rank. *The Daily Telegraph* is still, as a Victorian rival said, full of "senile adulation for the powers that be." Thanks to elephantine government intervention, truth was the first casualty of the Falklands War, as it had been of the First and Second World Wars. The rise of newspaper-owning conglomerates has made the press vulnerable to powerful but subtle pressures from Westminster.

However, no such tentative reservations should be allowed to obscure the fact that Stephen Koss has achieved an unprecedented triumph. It is a commonplace to say that the history of the press cannot be written. One need only examine the bulging contents of newspaper libraries, not to mention the imaginative reminiscences of old journalists or the unreadable tracts of new social scientists, to understand why. Yet Koss, though restricting himself to an investigation of the area where press and politics converge, has well-nigh accomplished the impossible.



Lord
 Beaverbrook,
 celebrating a
 Conservative
 victory, as
 portrayed by
 Michael Cummings

Whose press is free?

Agents of Power: The Role of the News Media in Human Affairs

by J. Herbert Altschull
 Longman, 355 pp. \$29.95

by JAMES BOYLAN

An old friend, who is both a certified holder of a degree from Columbia's Graduate School of Journalism and a veteran of the news business, has been branded a traitor to the American way of journalism. Former colleagues hiss epithets at him; major news organizations refuse to return his calls; the reporters he must deal with in the course of business view him as having gone over to "the other side."

His crime is that he works for UNESCO. Long before the Reagan administration (to the cheers of *The New York Times*) decided to cancel American membership in that agency, much of American journalism had decided that UNESCO represented an organized conspiracy to seize control of the world's free press and turn it over to communism, or something equally sinister.

Which illustrates the major point of J. Herbert Altschull's *Agents of Power*. He contends that although journalists almost always believe that their own beliefs about journalism represent universal truths, their credos are in fact highly ethnocentric or, more accurately, economic. That is, journalists come to believe that the particular system in which they operate is the one home of real journalism; more important, they tend in the long run to believe and write what the system would like to have them believe and write.

Altschull, a former reporter and editor and now a journalism professor at Indiana University, says that American journalists are peculiarly prone to this failure of perspective. Many of them hold it as an article of faith that they are truly independent of both the political establishment and economic influences, and thus can write as they please. (This position can perhaps be compared to that

James Boylan, the founding editor of the *Review*, is a professor of journalism at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

of goldfish, which can swim as far as they like in the bowl.) Accordingly, they fear and loathe any system which suggests that journalism might be tempered to national goals or might have a relationship with government that is other than adversarial.

Altschull has managed the rather difficult task of standing outside the three major species of press systems that he discerns — capitalist, communist, and third world — and describing each dispassionately, in terms not only of each system's beliefs but also of each system's failures in practicing what it intends.

Thus, he is scarcely an apologist for the noncapitalist systems. What he does, and does most effectively, is to present the noncapitalist press in a way that should make it more understandable to American readers who are willing to expand their perspectives. Much of the material from what he chooses to call (I think unfortunately) the "advancing" nations is based on his own travels and is fresh and illuminating.

Moreover, his analytical narrative of the whole UNESCO involvement with international information flow and national press systems was, for me as a nonspecialist, very valuable. From that protracted debate he draws hopes for international understanding that contrast sharply with the slapdash and gloom-ridden coverage of these issues in the American general and trade press.

Readers should be warned that Altschull has placed a major obstacle in their path. Rather than proceeding directly to the main business of the book, he has chosen to illustrate what is ostensibly his major thesis — that journalism always acts for those in power — with several chapters of press history that remind one of those eighteenth-century tomes that began with the contemplation of ancient times and only gradually approached the subject at hand. These chapters do not strike me as being either necessary to the book or particularly good history — in part, perhaps, because they try to build fresh interpretations on stale materials.

But when Altschull gets around to discussing the contemporary world, it becomes clear that he is on a rather noble

mission. Forcing his way upstream against what a majority of American journalists believe to be their own uniqueness, he insists that journalists in disparate systems may have a task in common: the creation of new avenues of understanding between societies. Citing Albert Camus's injunctions to journalists — to refuse to lie about what we know and to resist oppression — Altschull proposes a third: "to write and edit in such a way as to help resolve the problems of humankind and not to exacerbate them."

Hildy's classroom

Behind The Front Page: The Story of the City News Bureau of Chicago

by A. A. Dornfeld

Academy Chicago. 331 pp. \$17.95

by RALPH WHITEHEAD, JR.

The classical ingredients for a good journalism school are easy to list but hard to find and harder still to pull together into a single pot:

First, the site of the school must be a major city. This enables its faculty members to be clinical professors by making it convenient for them to work at the craft themselves for a few hours a week or a few months a year. Their students will also be near enough to full-time journalists to see them in class or on the outside. Thus, they can gain tutelage or at least follow examples. A city base also lets the school do what is known in the real estate business as selling the view: the school can urge its students not to look inward at the school itself, but rather to cast their eyes outward through the windows and into the sights and colors of the urban vista. Even if students languish in the classroom, they can pick up plenty in the streets.

Second, the school must get the financial support of the local concentration of media organizations. This might come through an endowment by a great family fortune, such as that of a Pulitzer,

Ralph Whitehead, Jr., a professor of journalistic studies at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, is a former Chicago newspaper reporter.

a Medill, or a Newhouse. Or it might occur through a diversified set of ties. In such alliances, the dollars are merely the tangible signs of other terms in the partnership, such as the esteem of the industry for the school and the willingness of local shops to earmark jobs for the school's graduates.

Third, the school must surround its students with the iron discipline of what sociologists call a total institution and what Uncle Sam calls boot camp. In this atmosphere, the student or recruit is granted neither peace nor quarter and can draw only on the resources of his own psyche. If the task at hand is to telephone the next-of-kin of a victim of a hit-and-run in Berwyn or a terrorist assault in Beirut, the novice must have no choice but to do it and must *know* there is no choice. Mom can't make the call, and neither can Dad.

For five generations, and despite its lack of a formal educational charter, all three of these conditions have been met by Chicago's legendary City News Bureau. This local wire service exists officially to pool the coverage of much of the news of the city, but it serves unofficially as a major training ground for young reporters, who do two or three years there and then move on. City News is located in the center of a great news town. It is backed as a commercial venture by the Chicago newspapers, though its wire also serves a score of radio and TV clients as well as the downtown dailies. And it is rightfully known for the rigor of its training and the severity of its all-embracing code of journalistic discipline, summed up in the bureau's de facto motto:

"If your mother tells you she loves you, *check it out!*"

Behind The Front Page amounts to a documentary history of City News. A. A. Dornfeld, the forty-year veteran who served in effect as its chief academic officer, supplies narration, but he also opens his pages to the testimony of a score of City News graduates, including such distinguished alumni as Mike Royko and Kurt Vonnegut. These memoirs of basic training are enriched by tales of other City News grads — figures as diverse as Pulitzer Prize-winner Seymour Hersh and the confidence man

"Yellow Kid" Weil, artist Claes Oldenburg and actor Melvyn Douglas — and fill more than a third of the text. One colorful chapter details life at the bureau in the roaring twenties, when one of the authors of *The Front Page*, Charles MacArthur, and the prototypes for three of his characters were learning their trade there. Finally, Dornfeld appends the bureau's 1897 stylebook, the genesis of the spare prose style used in City News copy to this day.

The forte of City News, as this book shows in detail, has always been its ability to school its novices in a specific but valuable form of journalism: the exhaustive reporting of the words and deeds of urban officialdom.

As a rule, City News beats are public sector beats. They are bounded by the walls of institutional structures such as police stations, courthouses, the morgue, or the State of Illinois Building. The reporter's job begins with the scraps of evidence that routinely flow through these buildings — police reports, court

files, dead bodies, docket items for the regulatory boards — but doesn't always end with them. Through persistence and a deft touch with the telephone and even a little imagination, the City News reporter must pursue these scraps to discover what larger pattern they represent. Usually, the pattern is routine or predictable and of little interest to the reporter's desk. One time in a hundred, though, the path leads somewhere interesting. Late one night in September 1982, for example, a routine check on a death reported by the Cook County medical examiner's office led John Flynn Rooney to discover the first of what would soon be known as the Tylenol murders.

On the beats, the young reporters rarely come upon a disinterested source. This experience soon gives them simple but useful insights into the limits of information. Then, too, a City News novice can get a fact wrong in, for instance, a routine police story, because the police report itself is in error. The cops are

reporters, too, and sometimes they get their facts straight and sometimes they don't, even on easy cases and for legitimate reasons. Such experiences prompt City News beginners not only to be skeptical of police reports but to be skeptical of all apparent certainties, official and unofficial, *including their own*. The only reigning doctrine in the City News experience is to avoid the doctrine. As Mike Royko once put it: "What City News taught me was to always make the extra call, the one you knew you really didn't have to make."

The limitations of the City News brand of reporting are plain. Because it focuses so narrowly on whatever events break through public sector channels, it overlooks much of what happens in the economy and virtually all of what happens in the culture. A City News reporter learns reporting, not economics or sociology. What the City News Bureau does do, however, it does well. And what it does is reported well in *Behind The Front Page*. ■

This rendition of the City News Bureau, commissioned by the Chicago Press Veterans in 1956, now hangs in the Chicago Press Club.



Painting by Dean Cornwell/Courtesy: Academy Chicago

BRIEFINGS

by GLORIA COOPER

Burning issue

The World Cigarette Pandemic, edited by Alan Blum, M.D. *New York State Journal of Medicine*, December 1983

There are enough story ideas here to choke a camel — and maybe the entire tobacco industry as well. Underlying all of them, and a story in itself, are questions involving the coverage of smoking and health by the mainstream press, and the degree to which the \$1.5 billion spent annually on cigarette advertising is blowing smoke in the media's greedy eyes. If the subject seems stale, think again: it is reignited in the pages of this medical journal with a fresh urgency that is not easily waved away.

In assembling his 157-page package, physician-editor Alan Blum has left no leaf unturned. Fifty-odd articles, by experts from the U.S. and abroad, examine the tobacco problem in the most concrete of clinical, political, economic, legal, and ethical terms, while dozens of samples drawn from five decades of cigarette advertising trace the marketing history of the weed from early claims of medical endorsement to current pitches to women, children, and the third world.

The media-tobacco syndrome is far from simple. Contrast, for example, the field reports on the status of clean-indoor-air legislation in such states as Minnesota, where, according to a public-opinion survey by the *Minneapolis Tribune*, the act in force there since 1975 retains its political popularity, with the experience in Florida, where a Dade County referendum calling for such legislation was narrowly defeated in 1979, thanks to a \$1 million advertising campaign by the tobacco industry and ridicule from *The Miami Herald* and *The Miami News*. Compare, if you will, the policies of seven other countries around the world, ranging from Norway, where all cigarette advertising and promotion of tobacco products has been banned since 1973, with appreciable positive results (and where, contrary to the predictions of the tobacco lobby, the newspapers did not fold), to the situation in Malaysia, where cigarettes can be advertised in over fifty papers in eight different languages, where consumption is rising — and where the annual Malaysian press awards are sponsored by the Malaysian Tobacco Company.

Consider, too, the fascinating exchange of letters between a New York vascular surgeon and *The New York Times*, in which the doctor's repeated challenges to the paper's policy of accepting cigarette advertising, and his pleas that it open its pages to a discussion of the issue, finds him on an epistolary treadmill to silence and stonewalls. The replies — and the non-replies — of the paper's manager of advertising acceptability, vice president, publisher, editorial page editors, and manager of advertising acceptability (again) have an eloquence all their own.

Symptoms of the media's weakness are not hard to spot. Here are the television networks, unstained by tobacco commercials since 1965 yet still lighting up the screen with priceless exposure of tobacco-sponsored sports events — events, incidentally, that also get plugged in newspaper ads for department stores like Gimbels and Saks Fifth Avenue, which happen to be owned by BAT Industries, formerly British American Tobacco. (Financial details on the six major American tobacco companies and their interlocks with other sources of lucrative advertising, such as distillers, theaters, hotels, and pharmaceutical companies, make instructive reading.) Here is PBS's documentary *The Chemical People*, a much-touted look at adolescent drug abuse that contains not a single mention of smoking or of advertising for alcohol or cigarettes — despite a report from the National Institute on Drug Abuse indicting cigarette smoking as the nation's leading form of drug dependence. Here is *The New York Times*, dutifully reporting in a wire story on page D18 the surgeon general's statement that 170,000 Americans



will die in 1983 of smoking-related heart disease, while covering congressional hearings on formaldehyde in the paper's front section — and here is the *Times*, together with *Time*, taking out ads in *The United States Tobacco Journal* thanking the cigarette companies for their advertising business. Here are the mass circulation women's magazines, including the liberated *Ms.*, sidestepping their responsibility to their increasing numbers of smoking readers, while tobacco ads project images of women that are designed to get high ratings from feminists. (Media buyers may be especially interested in the article "A Positive Health Strategy for the Office Waiting Room" in which a Georgia physician urges his 400,000 American colleagues to cancel their subscriptions to magazines that carry tobacco advertising — or, at the very least, to follow the practice of those physicians who scrawl antismoking messages across the ads in their waiting-room magazines. A sidebar lists the growing number of magazines that refuse such ads.)

Plenty of other prescriptions are offered here — to the medical community, to consumer groups, to legislators, to the media — all of which seem to make uncommon good sense. As one British clinician puts it to his colleagues in research, "To be silent during a public health tragedy is not honest medicine." Readers of this stunning issue will know that it isn't honest journalism, either.

Risky business

Editors and Stress, by Robert H. Giles, Associated Press Managing Editors Association, 50 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10020, 1983.

These are the times that try editors' souls — and their bodies, it seems, as well. Circulation is down; blood pressure is up. Advertising pressure mounts; sex drive drops. The newshole diminishes; the chest pains do not. Still, they like the work — even boast of the toughness it demands. And somehow, in the high-powered, high-tension, high-anxiety jungle of the daily news, they manage to adapt and survive.

But for how long? Not very, judging from a disquieting new study designed to learn more about the health of newspaper editors and the stresses of the job. Prepared for the Associated Press Managing Editors Association by Robert H. Giles, editor of the *Democrat and Chronicle Times-Union* of Rochester, New York, the 137-question survey suggests that the species, if not exactly endangered, is moving steadily toward risk. Of the 544 newsroom managers responding to the computerized questionnaire, nearly 40 percent report job-related health problems ranging from insomnia, backache, and fatigue to ulcers, heart disease, arthritis, asthma, cancer, alcoholism, drug abuse, stroke, and hypertension (the most frequently mentioned problem of them all); as recently

he or she disagrees; to carry out assignments and maintain standards without sufficient resources to do the job; to compromise journalistic values for reasons of economy or because of pressure from influential outsiders; and to fulfill his or her responsibilities without the authority to control staffing, budget, and newshole. In the last analysis, it seems, the bottom-line difference between sickness and health may turn upon control.

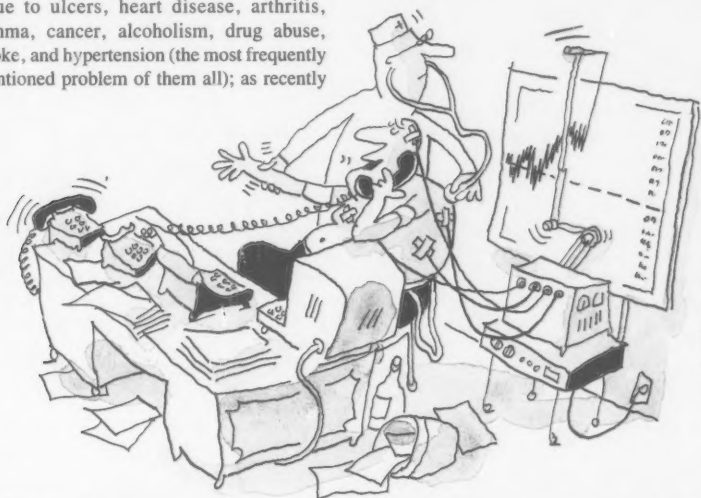
An unusual dimension is added to the study by the inclusion of the coded and matched responses of spouses and live-in

but a mere sample of what they describe as the "ferment in the field." While most of the pieces will be best appreciated by their colleagues in research, at least one, by sociologist Herbert Gans, has the virtue of being both intelligible and relevant to journalists as well.

Noting the flood of studies in the past ten years on how the news is chosen, covered, processed, and disseminated by local and national media, Gans, who is a professor at Columbia and the author of the highly respected 1980 book *Deciding What's News*, points to new directions in which the research winds should blow. Basically, he urges researchers to pay less attention to news organizations and more to other primary aspects of the journalistic enterprise: First, to the newsmakers, and the effects of their power to create news, criticize it, and exert pressure on the media. Second, to previous media studies, to pinpoint the differences between conclusions reached on the basis of empirical evidence and those weighted by the researchers' own cultural backgrounds and political values. (He pointedly cites the work of Lichter and Rothman on the liberal leanings of American journalists.) Third, to the audience (virtually ignored, Gans observes, except, belatedly, at election time) and its patterns of use — and non-use — of news. Fourth, to political organizations, to learn if and how the news media, and particularly television, are altering the setting of the political agenda and the conduct of political business. And finally, and most importantly, to the news itself, to illuminate its content not with sterile computer-aided quantification but rather with the kind of qualitative, textual, "thick description" analysis used to such good effect by literary critics.

Clearly, research for research's sake is not Gans's dish; for him its justification lies in its usefulness in attaining democratic goals. To that end, he warns against such misguided efforts as, say, studies of the effect of violence in the news, on the ground that it could be used to legitimate censorship; he calls instead for the kinds of studies that would lead to positive changes in news policy: studies of such "widely-agreed upon evils" as censorship, monopoly, racism, sexism, and — what he regards as "the most prime evil of all" — the inequality of access to the news media by the powerless and the poor.

All of which suggests that the perennial debates between communications scholars, as well as those between the scholars and the news media, will continue to flourish, and that, if Gans's advice is taken to heart, the next decade's harvest of news-related studies should be pretty good. Watch this space. ■



as 1979, a similar study had placed the figure at closer to 30 percent.

The findings also suggest that the increasing vulnerability of editors to stress is linked to their increasing involvement with the bottom line — that the evolving dual role as editor of a newspaper and manager of a "profit center" imposes differing sets of standards and goals that inherently conflict. Other new stresses, apparently, are installed with the VDTs. And, of course, the familiar newsroom headaches have not gone away: confirming current medical notions about "good" stress and "bad," the editors report that, while such traditional demands as meeting deadlines, handling highly competitive people, and insuring accuracy seem to produce positive feelings of stimulation and challenge, other burdens, including constant interruptions and difficulties in finding the time and energy to pursue a satisfying personal life, leave them with a negative sense of frustration, annoyance, and concern.

But by far the most stressful situations that editors encounter involve the boss — situations in which the publisher typically requires the editor to implement decisions with which

mates, 358 of whom also returned the questionnaire. Since Giles's 160-page report reprints the entire questionnaire together with both sets of responses, quantified item-by-item, journalists and their families will find it hard to resist measuring their own experiences with stress against those recorded here — an exercise which in itself may be of salutary value. Professional commiseration, after all, brings a comfort of its own, as does the discovery that most editors, sick or well, worry about their weight.

Tomorrow's papers

News Media, News Policy, and Democracy: Research for the Future, by Herbert J. Gans, *Journal of Communication*, Summer 1983

For those who toil in the vineyards of communications research, this is a heady season. So abundant are current questions about the role and direction of that maturing discipline, say the editors of the journal, that the thirty-five essays by scholars from ten different countries collected in this special issue are

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Notes on Newsweek

TO THE REVIEW:

Newsweek's [former] editor, William Broyles, Jr., is quoted as saying it's "a physical fact" that "more than half the people in America live west of the Mississippi" ("Deep in the Heart of *Newsweek*," *CJR*, January/February). If Broyles is correct, this bit of information surely deserves a *Newsweek* cover, since it would be startling news to the nation's demographers.

According to the latest edition (1982-83) of the *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, only 85 million people (or 37.1 percent) of the total U.S. population of 229 million lived in the states (including all of Minnesota) lying west of the Mississippi River, as of July 1, 1981.

JIM DEUTSCH
Washington, D.C.

TO THE REVIEW:

Maybe I've been living in Texas too long, but I've got to admit that I don't understand what is so "odd" about a Texan at *Newsweek*, as your cover states. Am I missing something?

JOSEPH NOCERA
Austin, Tex.

TO THE REVIEW:

Dart: to the *Columbia Journalism Review*, for "Deep in the Heart of *Newsweek*." The *Review's* favorable mention of Osborn Elliott ("After more than a decade of stability with Osborn Elliott at the helm in the sixties — a period during which *Newsweek* rose from second-rate to 'hot-book' status by its enterprising coverage of civil rights, youth, and Vietnam — no editor has survived more than three and a half years") neglected to mention that Elliott himself was fired, in 1975, and

that he currently is publisher of the *Columbia Journalism Review*.

GENE KRZYZYNSKI
Copy editor
The Philadelphia Inquirer
Philadelphia, Pa.

Witness for the prosecution

TO THE REVIEW:

I was somewhat surprised when Tom Goldstein called me to ask a few questions about journalistic ethics. As he admits in "Odd Couple: Prosecutors and the Press" (*CJR*, January/February), he was Mayor Koch's press secretary who enforced the unethical policy of not giving any writer from *The Village Voice* an interview with the mayortollah. A *New York Times* editorial criticized this anti-free-press policy.

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So I was not really surprised when I read Goldstein's references to me when his article was published. I told him twice I had not written any of the *Voice* articles critical of Representative Charles Schumer, that my colleague Wayne Barrett had written them all, on his own investigative initiative. Yet Goldstein attributed some of the articles to me — which, by coincidence I'm sure, is also something Schumer's lawyers mistakenly said in a court affidavit. But a reading of back issues of the *Voice* will show that my by-line never appeared over any of the Schumer pieces, although they were so good that I wish I could claim credit for them.

I also explained to Goldstein how articles actually written by me had led to the indictment and conviction of some bad characters. These included nursing-home owner Bernard Bergman, city councilman Sam Wright, Teamster union leader John Cody, and landlord-arsonist Joe Bald. But all Goldstein wrote was that these articles had led to "investigations." My essential point — that I'm interested in actually changing conditions — was lost. So was the verification of my allegations by prosecutors, juries, and appellate judges.

I just don't think Tom Goldstein is

qualified to sit in judgment on the ethics of journalists.

JACK NEWFIELD
The Village Voice
New York, N.Y.

Tom Goldstein replies: *I regret having mistakenly lumped Jack Newfield and Wayne Barrett together as authors of articles on Charles Schumer. As for Newfield's assertion that he told me not only once, but twice, that he was not a co-author of the pieces on Schumer, I can only say that neither my notes nor my memory bear him out on this. Meanwhile, it seemed to me important to report a sworn statement that Newfield was out to "get" Schumer, and Newfield's denial of this charge.*

TO THE REVIEW:

On his way to writing a book on press ethics, Tom Goldstein, whose function once was the selective frustration of freedom-of-information requests for New York Mayor Ed Koch, found time to focus on mine. Of course, he did so without bothering to call me, though I and Jack Newfield are clearly the bad guys of the piece. Newfield does not speak for me, especially about pieces — like the Schumer pieces Goldstein wrote about — that he had

nothing to do with. Neither did Goldstein disclose that I have written biting about his own version of investigative reporting — several pages of manufactured puff about New York Senator Al D'Amato for *The New York Times Magazine*. (I did call him when I wrote about him, but he refused to answer my questions, a courtesy I believe all reporters owe each other.)

If Goldstein had bothered to call me, he would have gotten answers quite different from Newfield's. I believe that information trades are an ordinary element of investigative reporting. I also believe that a crooked pol is the same as a street mugger and I would not shrink, within clear limits, from helping law enforcement catch either, especially if any of the facts I wrote about the pol were challenged and needed buttressing.

Goldstein's promotion of the Schumer defense claim that Schumer's prosecution resulted from our illegitimate "pressure" is ridiculous. When he was a court reporter, Goldstein couldn't have gotten a line of it past his editors. U.S. Attorney Ray Dearie recommended Schumer's indictment before Newfield or I had ever even met the man. The public-integrity and criminal divisions of the Justice Department in Washington —



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where not even the long arm of the *Voice* has been known to reach — concurred. Brooklyn District Attorney Liz Holtzman, someone the *Voice* has at least supported, tried to get rid of the case. But then, as is his wont, Goldstein never bothered to call any of the prosecutors who reviewed the case either.

WAYNE R. BARRETT
The Village Voice
New York, N.Y.

Tom Goldstein replies: *I tried to reach Wayne Barrett at the Voice; he didn't call back. Only a fraction of my article dealt with the Schumer matter and I certainly did not regard Barrett and Newfield as "clearly the bad guys of the piece."*

Editors' note: *Neither did we.*

Con-fusion

TO THE REVIEW:

I must object to Terri Schultz-Brooks's statement in "The Copyright Con" (CJR, January/February) that *The Nation* "absconds with its authors' copyrights by reselling their work at will." (I will forgive her little *jeu* about us "snuggling in the same bed" with *National Review*; at least she didn't mention that mad night with *Cosmo*.) The author found

our policy "hazy" and then briskly set down what she decided it was, in the process juxtaposing a blind anecdote with a quote from me to make it seem that *Nation* editor speak with forked tongue but alert journalist gettun real story.

Let me try one more time to communicate what I thought I told your reporter: *The Nation's* policy on syndication is very clear. Authors own the copyrights to their stories. We have a news service that attempts to syndicate *Nation* articles — but it does so only with the author's permission. We split syndication fees 50-50 with the writers. The overwhelming majority of our contributors welcome this service, since it spreads their ideas to a wider readership. The money we make from syndication dents only slightly our annual deficits.

As for the "right to sell reprints" stamp on the backs of our checks to contributors, this is a bureaucratic convenience and in lieu of those elaborate four-page contracts the large magazines send out. If the writer wants to retain reprint rights and all proceeds therefrom, he or she can cross it out before endorsing the check. Of course, if we sell syndication rights we must have them exclusively, because if we should make a sale to *The Washington Post's* op-ed page, say, and the writer, on his own, should make one to

The New York Times without telling us, there would be trouble. To repeat, an author can keep the rights or can opt to allow us to syndicate his story. We don't "abscond" with anything.

RICHARD LINGEMAN
Executive editor
The Nation
New York, N.Y.

Terri Schultz-Brooks replies: *Many authors who have written for The Nation find its copyright policy confusing. It is possible that Mr. Lingeman's letter will finally clear up the confusion.*

TO THE REVIEW:

Terri Schultz-Brooks neglected to mention two very important issues:

□ If magazine editors assign a writer to deliver an article and that article is based on an idea supplied by the editor, then the copyright is the property of the magazine. Writers certainly deserve to maintain ownership of material that they submit to magazines.

□ Publishers share equally with authors in the income received from the reprinting of book excerpts. This is certainly not the lion's share, especially given the fact that the book publishers handle negotiations, see that agreements are executed, and then collect the money. In some cases, the permissions fees do not even cover the publishers' out-of-pocket expenses.

Because magazines have different policies regarding the purchase of material, writers must carefully check the letters they write to publishers and the backs of the checks they receive prior to endorsement.

ALLAN LANG
President
International Book Marketing Limited
New York, N.Y.

Terri Schultz-Brooks replies: *Mr. Lang is wrong. Under the terms of the Copyright Act of 1976, copyright belongs automatically to the creator of the work. It is irrelevant whether the editor or the writer came up with the idea. As for Mr. Lang's second point, I did not touch on this issue because, by and large, it pertains to book publishing rather than magazine publishing.*

TO THE REVIEW:

CJR and Terri Schultz-Brooks are to be commended for her excellent article. As a freelancer for more than twenty-five years, I welcome the dissemination of this simple piece of news: you wrote it, you own it. The only thing a publisher does is buy the right to

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publish it *once*. If he wants to do anything more with it, let him pay for the privilege.

May I suggest that, for additional reading, free-lancers should pick up a copy of the American Civil Liberties Union's recently published handbook, *The Rights of Authors and Artists* (\$3.95, Bantam Books paperback).

ALAN CARUBA
Editorial consultant
The Caruba Organization
Maplewood, N.J.

The Anastasi-Ethnos libel case

TO THE REVIEW:

With reference to your article on the controversy surrounding my book about the Greek daily *Ethnos* being the West's first KGB-supported disinformation journal ("Greece's Disinformation Daily?" *CJR*, November/December), I would like to point out that I am not the only writer to have charged *Ethnos* with having Soviet connections. More than fifteen Greek and foreign publications, including newspapers, magazines, and books, as well as two State Department reports on disinformation, have reached similar conclusions. For example, the only mention of Greece in the latest book published on the KGB, by British author Brian Freemantle, concerns the KGB's financing of *Ethnos* "through a shell company."

PAUL ANASTASI
Part-time correspondent
The New York Times
Athens, Greece

Editor's note: *Last December, a Greek court convicted Anastasi on two counts of libeling and defaming Ethnos publisher George Bobolas. The thirty-three-year old Cypriot writer was sentenced to two years in prison and ordered to pay Bobola: symbolic damages of \$300. He is free pending an appeal, which will be heard sometime this spring.*

The Belmont stakes

TO THE REVIEW:

Sandy Goodman, the author of "Too Good to be True" (*CJR*, January/February) appears to have misunderstood the intent and methodology of the Figgie report on safe communities. He apparently interpreted our report as stating that we had identified the fifteen safest communities in the country and that Belmont was one of them. As we pointed out to Mr. Goodman in a personal interview, the methodological section of the report clearly states that we compiled our own list of "relatively safe communities." The report presents Belmont as a *relatively* safe community worthy of study. This conclusion was

based on research into New York City Police Department crime reports, interviews with the Bronx police department, and an information search on the subject.

PETER FINN
Chairman
Research & Forecasts
New York, N.Y.

Sandy Goodman replies: *If I "misunderstood" the intent and methodology of the Figgie report, as did the writer of the Times's editorial prelude to its piece on safe communities, could it be because the report practically begs to be misunderstood? The chapter in which Belmont is mentioned is titled "Safe Communities," not "Relatively Safe Communities," and the first paragraph speaks of "a cross-section of some of the safest places in America."*

The other side of El Salvador

TO THE REVIEW:

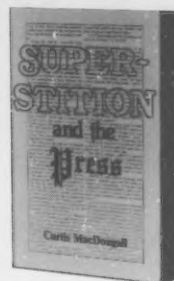
Michael Massing's "About-face on El Salvador" (*CJR*, November/December) depressed me. Massing seems to object not to the dubious journalistic practices of the correspondents he discusses, but only to the U.S. government's apparent success in persuading the correspondents to use those practices in behalf of U.S. policy instead of against it.

He quotes *The New York Times* as saying that El Salvador's new defense minister "is known in government circles as an excellent administrator who enjoys the role of mediator," is "soft-spoken, amiable," and is expected by "U.S. officials" to make "sweeping changes in the military command and the way it operates." His objection is that this is "deferential" to U.S. policy.

The real problem is that this is poor journalism. If a *Times* reporter wants to quote some human beings by name to the effect that the new minister is capable or a nice guy, and then quote other human beings to the contrary, that is fine. But attributing paragraph after paragraph of praise to "government circles" and "American officials" makes the statements valueless.

When ABC News announces that "the war, in short, is being fought more professionally," Massing does not challenge the stupidity of the statement or correspondent Jack Smith's qualification for making such a judgment. All that bothers him is that there is little in this "that could have displeased President Reagan."

Instead of arguing policy ("Americans fear the U.S. may be functioning in Central America as the defender of the oligar-



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chy...'), Dan Rather should have responded to President Reagan's criticism of the media by saying, "Look, Mr. President, we report what we see and what people tell us. If that makes your policy look bad, I'm sorry, but it's not our fault." Unfortunately, of course, he could not say that, because it was not true. As Reagan charges, the media have succumbed to "hype and hoopla." The fact that these first benefited one side and then the other is unimportant.

LEE LEVITT
New York, N.Y.

Hey, how about Tulsa?

TO THE REVIEW:

I'm sure Gannett's newspaper in Muskogee, Oklahoma, deserved its laurel (*CJR*, January/February) for a series that you report "unearthed little-known facts" about grain thefts in the midwest.

But I feel compelled to note that in March 1982, the *Tulsa World* reported: "The Muskogee area 'is the grain-theft capital of the country,' according to a veteran Oklahoma grain elevator manager." And then proceeded in several stories by Mark Lee and Ken Jackson to report how grain is stolen and why many thefts are never prosecuted. It was a very thorough job of reporting.

I also feel compelled in saying that the *Tulsa World* was the first newspaper to adequately report the magnitude of grain thefts in this part of the United States.

BOB HARING
Executive editor
Tulsa World
Tulsa, Okla.

Missing pages?

Readers who received incomplete copies of the January/February issue may obtain replacements by calling or writing *CJR*, 700 Journalism Building, Columbia University, New York, N.Y. 10027; 212-280-2716. The *Review* and its bindery regret the inconvenience.

Correction

In "Schudson's Wager" (Briefings, January/February), a wrong address was given for the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies. It is located in Queenstown, Maryland.

Deadline

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Brantford (Ont.) Expositor 11/17/83

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Dearborn Hts. (Mich.) Leader 12/29/83

Husband Beats Republican Wife

Indianapolis News 11/9/83

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